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ISSUE 253 · SEPTEMBER 2015 · £3.95
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LOOK BOTH WAYS

I'm not a big fan of The Bandwagon. Not an admirer of unoriginality and am certainly not a lover of seeing a tattoo that I've seen before on somebody else but over the last few weeks I've been following (as much as an off the grid person can) *The Semicolon Project*, simply because it's a wonderful and beautiful idea.

The official line on the project is this:

"The semicolon project is for everyone who self-harms, is suicidal, depressed, has anxiety, is unhappy, going through a broken heart or just lost a loved one. Draw a semicolon on your wrist." It then goes on to say:

"A semicolon represents a sentence the author could have ended, but chose not to. That author is you and the sentence is your life."

I'm totally behind this—you can find them at thesemicolonproject.com. If there are people reading who have committed to such a thing, and I can get enough images mailed in, I'd really like to make something of it in the pages here and maybe print some stories to go along with them. It's a fledgling idea but it's an idea that's right there on the table. It could be beautiful and touching.

It could also go horribly wrong. You would think the concept of Get Good Ink would be pretty safe with the two simple shapes that make up a semicolon, but alas, some people can still be in too much of a rush to check whether their chosen tattooist can draw a small circle properly. It may be in the spirit of something great, but like they say—'You are the author', to which I say, 'Don't write a crap story.'

I probably don't need to say it here because our readership is wise beyond all measure but I feel the need to point out how much of a difference there is between self-harming, being suicidal or depressed and simply being unhappy unhappy or going through a broken heart. Those are so much not the same sort of thing, it's frightening. It's a great idea to raise awareness of subjects that normally get brushed under the carpet but to open the barn doors and include being 'unhappy' is wrong. Everybody on the face of the planet is unhappy at some point in their life—it's part of what being human is about. To throw it in with other



LIONEL FAHY



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THEY SAY—'YOU ARE THE AUTHOR', TO WHICH I SAY, 'DON'T WRITE A CRAP STORY.'

mental states that are actually quite serious isn't doing anybody any favours.

Anyway, that's a small gripe.

This is a fine idea that's been let loose on the world and to be frank, the use of the semicolon as a tattoo raising awareness about how fragile human beings can be is a far better use of it than its actual use as a punctuation mark.

I can put it no better than Kurt Vonnegut who delivered this: "Here is a lesson in creative writing. First rule: Do not use semicolons. They are transvestite hermaphrodites representing absolutely nothing. All they do is show you've been to college."

Genius. ▣

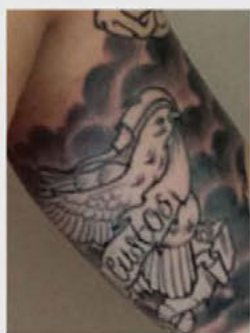
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Dr Mark Burgess is a psychologist with a professional passion for tattooing. Here, he discusses the processes that drive body modification and explores the dark psyche of tattoo addiction.

26 PIZZA AND DONUTS

Trading his studies in science and mathematics for the culinary world, Chef Jeff Mahin worked at Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck as a lab assistant. Today, Mahin is back Stateside making a name for himself with pizzas and donuts... and then there's the tattoos.

32 A STORY OF NEPAL

The ballroom of the Yak and Yeti hotel saw its first visitors in 1953.

Two generations later, the heart of the Nepalese capital was hosting the fifth International Nepal Tattoo Convention, only to be severely shaken by the earthquake...

64 BEHIND THE INK

Wayne Simmons continues his Behind The Ink series, unpacking the pieces that make up some of his favourite artists working today. This month, he chats to two realism artists with a very black and grey approach to life.

70 ORIENTAL BEAT

While tattooing is hitting its stride in Russian society, with realism and dotwork being the most popular styles, Slava Starkov continues to shape Saint Petersburg with his own appreciation

of the Japanese tattoo, with a strong focus on impact, motion and technique.

76 THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

Canadian-based artist Cody Eich is driven by his faith that in turn grounds him, and underpins his desire for perfection. Nicky Connor seeks the truth.

82 THE POWER OF INK

This year's Great British Tattoo Show was a memorable one for Beccy Rimmer. She was dying to tell us why...

88 TWENTY GREAT ROCK STAR TATTOOS

With festival season upon us, whilst having a digital clean-up, we found a folder marked up as '20 Great Rock Star Portraits'. Here's hoping you enjoy out find as much as we did.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

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ISSN 0966-4351
Can't find Skin Deep magazine
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Printed by
William Gibbons & Sons Ltd





THE WORLD RECORD BREAKING TATTOO CONVENTION

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Rob Ratcliffe
Rob Richardson
Robbie Taylor
Rory Craig
Rose Elizabeth
Sam Rowan
Samma Charles
Sasha Wilkinson
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Sean Sparks
Sean Welsh
Sebastian Peraj
Simon Ashley
Simon Baldwin
Simon Broomfield
Simon Coates
Simon Valentine
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Sonny Mitchell
Soozie Soo
Sowe 7 Sins
Stacey Green
Stuart Clark
Stuart Hancock
Tom Harris
Tom Wallace
Tomy Starfire
Tommy Gray Gunn
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Vicky Lou
Vincent Dexter

Wayne Green
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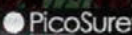
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ALL SUBMISSIONS TO SLEEVE NOTES GRATEFULLY RECEIVED. BE IT NEWS, AN EVENT, NEW MERCH, A STUDIO MOVE... WE'LL DO OUR VERY BEST TO LET EVERYBODY ELSE KNOW ABOUT IT TOO. EMAIL: NEWS@SKINDEEP.CO.UK OR IF YOU WANT TO BE ARCHAIC ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR: SKIN DEEP, 1 MARCHER COURT, SEALAND ROAD, CHESTER CH1 6BS. BRING IT.

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www.facebook.com/tattoomagazine



SHORT SLEEVES

GUEST SPOT

Kevin Paul's multi award winning studio are looking for guest artists. They are looking for experienced tattoo artist to guest spot at the studio based in Derby on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. It doesn't have to be every week, one shots are cool but you must have excellent portfolio and preferably have own client base. Just mail your portfolio to kevinpaultattoo@mail.com and he'll take care of you from there



JUN MATSUI

At the time of writing (July 3rd), Sang Bleu are to debut the world premiere of Jun Matsui, a short film documenting the legacy of one of Brazil's most prestigious tattooists and his influence within Brazil's underground subcultures. The movie—directed by Andre Ferezini—so far doesn't have a domestic release and there are no signs of a DVD either, but one or the other will doubtless be forthcoming in the near future. Andre Ferezini is a Brazilian director residing in Sao Paulo. Ferezini began his career by directing documentaries. he continues to do so as well as migrating into commercials. Interested in the subcultures of society as his subject matter, his visual style can be attributed through the films he directs. he is currently represented by Vektor Filmes. Jun Matsui is his first cinematographic short film. Jun Matsui should need no introduction.

For more details: junmatsuidoc.com or lifeunderzen.jp

WIN THE BIG JAM GIVEAWAY!

This is your last chance to win one of 15 pairs of tickets to the mighty Tattoo Jam. Back in its August summer slot for the first time in three years, the days will be long and mighty full of ink. The artist list is still growing every day and you should head over to tattoojam.com/artists for a final list of who you can find there.

The three day show has built quite the reputation over the last few years and don't forget that on Artist Friday, there's also the Tattoo Masters' Ball featuring our 2015 Industry Awards ceremony.

To be in with a chance at getting your hands on some free swag, simply send a blank email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line of TATTOO JAM and we'll do the rest in good time for you to make arrangements for the dog.



PARIS TATTOO BEAUTY AWARDS 2015



Casting is underway for the world's first tattoo beauty award. MTW Productions have spent the last few months looking for 16 tattooed models to participate in the 1st ever Miss Tattoo World documentary film, shooting beginning in Paris in September 2015.

Tattooed models cannot normally participate in national and international pageantry shows... and MTW thought it was time for a NEW TV show to honour tattooed women all over the world.

Visit www.misstattooworld.com for more info—the final selection will be announced at the end of July so we'll keep you clued up on future news!



LA PLAYA TATTOO CLUB

Our buddy Lionel Fahy has a 'small' show happening in France at the end of August, so if you have holidays booked in the area, we highly suggest you take some time out to pay a visit as there's some great artists working there.

The dates are 29–30 August at 20 Quai des Greniers, Saint-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie, La Roche-



sur-Yon, Croix-de-Vie, France. Aside from Lionel, you will also find Yann Black, Peter Bobeck, Jef Palombo and Lea Nahon among many others—in fact it doesn't look that small at all, but it does look pretty elite and essential if you like your tattoo art a little off the wall.

korriganshop.wix.com/expotattoostgilles

CONVENTIONS

CARDIFF TATTOO AND TOY CONVENTION

25–26 July 2015

Mercure Cardiff Holland House Hotel and Spa
24–26 Newport Rd, Caerdydd, Cardiff
South Glamorgan CF24 0DD
cardiffattooandtoycon.co.uk

TATTOO JAM

7–9 August 2015

Doncaster Racecourse,
The Grandstand,
Leger Way, Doncaster, DN2 6BB
tattoojam.com

7TH NORWICH BODY ART FESTIVAL

15–16 August 2015

The Open Youth Venue
20 Bank Plain,
Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4SF
norwichbodyartfestival.co.uk

DUNDEE TATTOO CONVENTION

15–16 August 2015

Abertay University
Kydd Building, Bell Street
Dundee, Dundee City DD1 1HG
dundeetattooconvention.co.uk

CAGLIARI TATTOO CONVENTION

21–23 August 2015

Hotel Setar
Via Lipari 1/3, 09045
Quartu S. Elena (Cagliari), Italy
tattooconventioncagliari.it

HELL CITY TATTOO FEST

28–30 August 2015

Arizona Biltmore Resort & SPA
2400 East Missouri Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85016, United States
hellcity.com

ICELAND TATTOO EXPO

4–6 September 2015

Radisson Blu Saga Hotel, Hagatorg,
107 Reykjavik, Iceland
icelandictattooexpo.com

BOURNEMOUTH INK 'N' ART TATTOO EXPO

5–6 September 2015

Bournemouth Pavilion Theatre and Ballroom
Westover Road, Bournemouth BH1 2BU
bournemouth.tattoo

KUSTOM KULTURE FESTIVAL

5–6 September 2015

Lincolnshire Show Ground
Lincoln LN2 2NA
kustomkultureblastoff.com

2ND BALKAN THESSALONIKI TATTOO CONVENTION

11–13 September 2015

Porto Palace Hotel Thessaloniki
65, 26th Octovriou Avenue,
Thessaloniki, Greece
thessalonikitattooconvention.gr

GALWAY TATTOO SHOW

12–13 September 2015

Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa Galway
Lough Atalia Road, Galway, Co. Galway,
Ireland
galwaytattooshow.ie

5TH FEMALE TATTOO SHOW

13 September 2015

Spencer St, Leamington Spa,
Warwickshire CV31 3NF
femaletattooshow.co.uk



IVANA TATTOO: LIMITED EDITION PRINTS

The very talented Ivana has finally gotten around to releasing some of her fabulous tattoo work for everybody to buy... as limited edition fine quality prints

"For quite some time, I had a goal and dream to create a line of fine art prints that would take some of my best tattoos and incorporate them into a new environment—lifted off the skin and remixed into a new art form that many people could enjoy.

"In September 2014, I collaborated with my friend & fellow artist, t.a.d.pole, and we turned that dream into a reality by launching RemixIT Design. Our first collection is based on five of my favourite tattoos that were then handed over to t.a.d.pole (a printmaker & graphic designer). She added her special touch with additional graphics, illustrative lines & marks, and even some components from

some of her own prints & photos.

"It was a highly collaborative process, with both of us taking the greatest of care with every detail of the images. When the images were finalised, we chose a printer that could meet our high quality standards. The end result are five new works of art—The Owl, The Deer, The Elephant, The Matrioska Doll, & The Blue Whale—each one printed as a Limited Edition of 50. They are printed on 290g Moab Entrada fine art paper, using archival inks and then hand numbered, signed, & embossed with our logo. We could not have been happier with our Series One Collection & are excited to share it with my loyal clients."



If you need to contact Ivana—and you do—you can do so at these places:

ivanatattooart.com

[instagram.com/ivanatattooart](https://www.instagram.com/ivanatattooart)

[pinterest.com/ivanatattooart/ivana-tattoo-art/](https://www.pinterest.com/ivanatattooart/ivana-tattoo-art/)

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POLICE THIS:

The ongoing [global] chat about uniformed services continues around the media as this week, three Chicago police officers filed a federal lawsuit against the department, challenging its new policy that requires uniformed officers to cover their tattoos.

The officers, all of whom served in the military and have tattoos on their arms, argue in the suit that the policy violates their First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and expression. The city of Chicago is named as the sole defendant.

According to the Police Department's new policy, which went into effect June 12, tattoos and body brandings cannot be visible on officers 'while on duty or representing the department, whether in uniform, conservative business attire, or casual dress.'

The hands, face, neck and other areas not covered by clothing must be covered with 'matching skin tone adhesive bandage or tattoo cover-up tape', according to the



policy. Uniformed officers also are barred from wearing baseball caps, and knit caps in the winter, under the new policy.

A number of officers spoke to the Chicago Tribune against the move, saying their tattoos are part of their identities. A police source familiar with the new policy has said the changes were prompted by newer officers whose tattoos were "over the top". Tattoos covering arms and necks, as well as the wearing of baseball caps backward, "had gotten extreme", the source said.

The source also has said the department was sympathetic to officers with tattoos commemorating their military service but ultimately decided it was too "difficult to draw a line".

The move put Chicago in line with other big-city police departments like those in New York and Los Angeles that have implemented similar changes to their uniform policies as body art has become more mainstream.

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Brian Batista

In a new occasional series, we thought it would be a blast to take tattoos out of the studio environment onto the streets of the world to see just what us tattooed people get up to in the name of making the world a better place. How you interpret that and what you come up with will dictate exactly how occasional it will be! Bring it if you've got it

"In May of 2014 I met Steffen Baldwin, the director of the Animal Cruelty Task Force of Ohio, and his rescued pit bull named Chesty. I drove up from Birmingham, Alabama to photograph them for my photography project TATTOOS & RESCUES (see Skin Deep issue 251).

"This one off photo shoot turned into a lasting friendship with Steffen and I returned to Marysville, OH in May this year to get more photos of him with his rescues. Among the dogs Steffen has staying at his home, he has Chesty and his best buddy Bullwinkle. One of their favourite activities is to run alongside of Steffen while he rides his longboard.

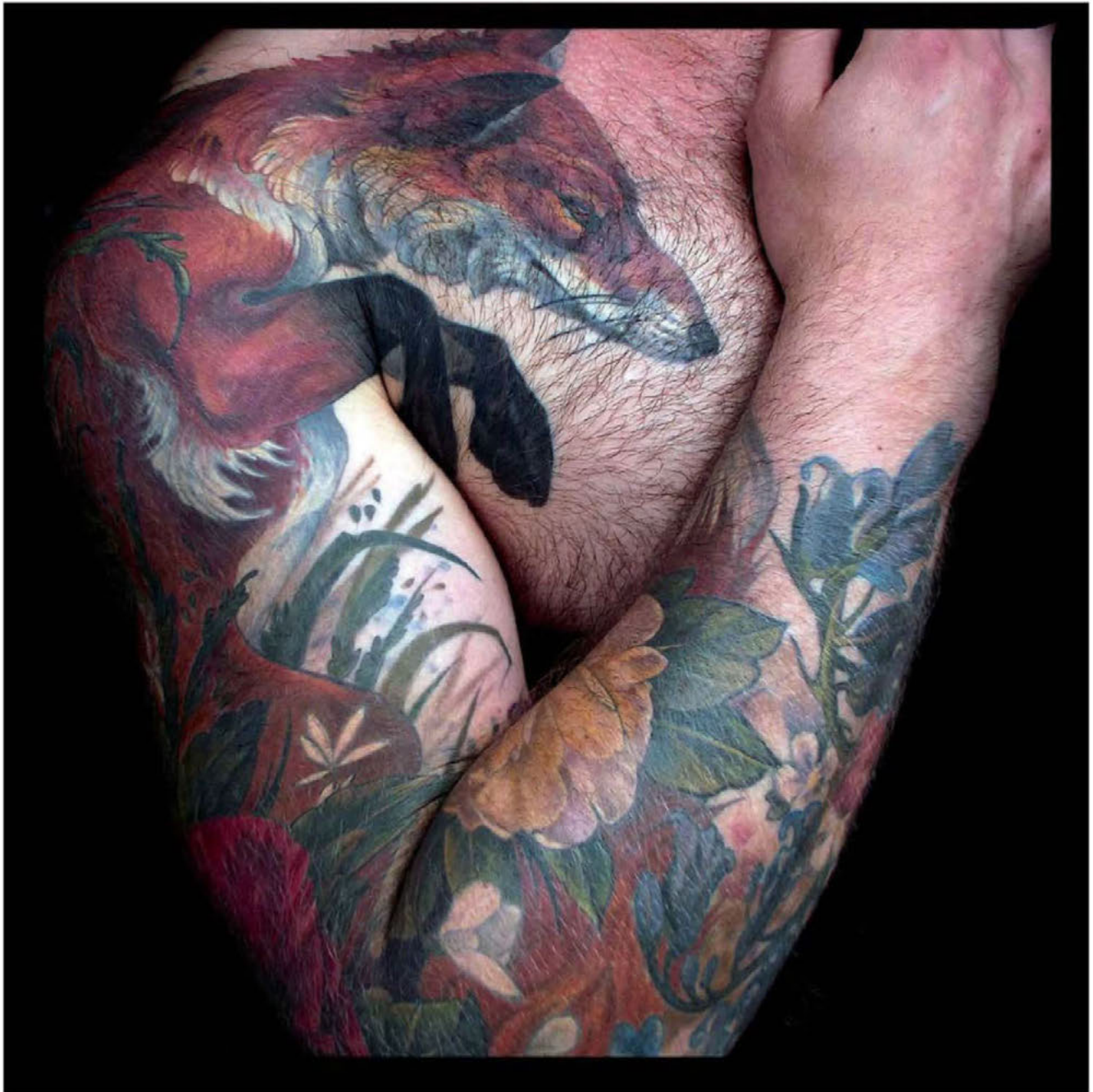
"Explaining this activity Steffen says 'I've worked with thousands of dogs that have behaviour problems and the number one reason when it comes to a strong, athletic, intelligent dog that is in a loving home; is nothing more than pure boredom and pent up frustration. A lack of mental and physical stimulation equal to the needs of your individual dog is the root problem behind so many other issues that dogs develop over time. Dogs love to be active and happy, they love to run, they love to have jobs and they love to do all of that with their owner.'"

BRIAN BATISTA
brimanphoto.com





by
James Robinson



“Tom came to me to asking for a sleeve inspired by his childhood. The brief was relatively simple as he grew up in the East Sussex countryside where there’s a lot of local subject matter to choose from. so this tattoo is inspired by much that.

“With an ongoing love of foxes, the main theme was easy and we incorporated flowers from around his neck of the woods that include poppies, thistles and bluebells.

“From my side of the fence, I thought it was important for the piece to have a very ‘English’ feel and I’m very pleased with the result.

“The tattoo took around 7 day sessions to complete.”

From the Ed: There’s something about this tattoo that works on a level outside of it being ‘just’ a great tattoo. I’ve seen it from multiple angles now and James has really nailed the positioning on this to the point that the damn fox looks like it’s always been there. Great work... plus, who doesn’t love a fox tattoo. Nobody, surely?

James Robinson

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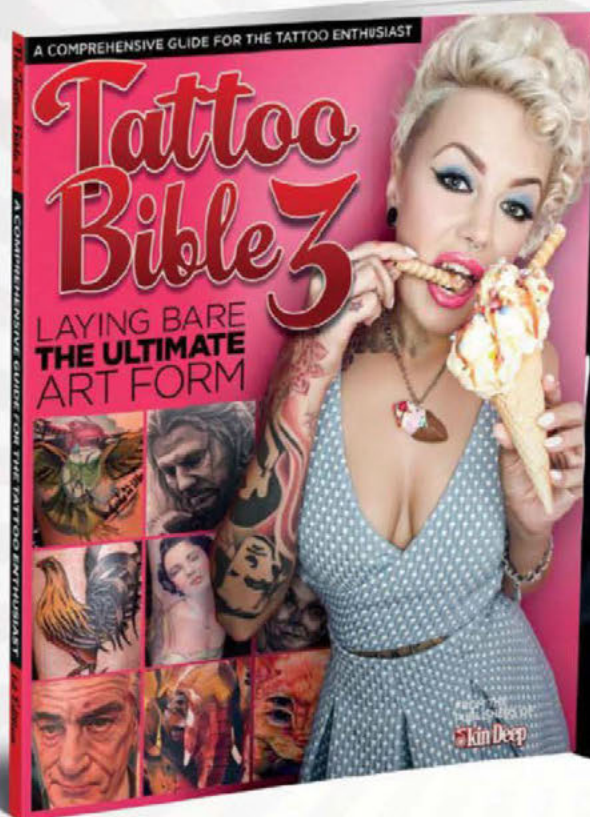
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BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

As you'll see later in the magazine [see the tattooed rock star section], we've been busy archiving material this month. In amongst the goodness, we came across so much artwork from around the world, it's a genuine shock when you look at exactly how much great material there is out there, that there is still dialogue out in the world about whether tattoo artists are capable of cutting it alongside of those who don't tattoo when it comes to art.

Anyway, maybe that's for others to worry about.

Meanwhile, we can just kick back and enjoy it...



Carola Decasa



Bernd Muss



Andrew Swarbrick

Nobody gets anywhere alone—all major artistic movements are achieved by groups of artists sharing ideas and goals

ANDREW SWARBRICK



Veronica Lendel



Erin Greenough

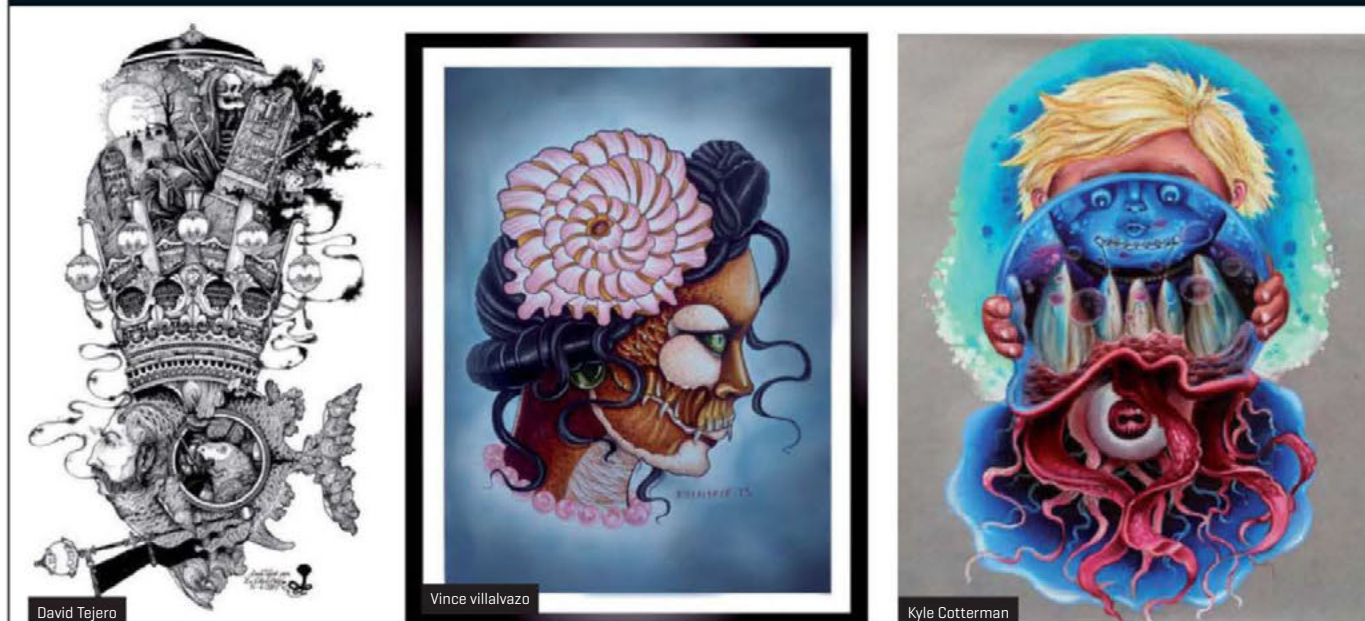
These days I like huge wall projects most, I find the different locations really interesting because there is no traditional space gallery

CAROLA DECASA



A big part of this profession is the journey towards improvement. I'm my own biggest critic, but that's how it's supposed to be, right?

JOEL MADBERG



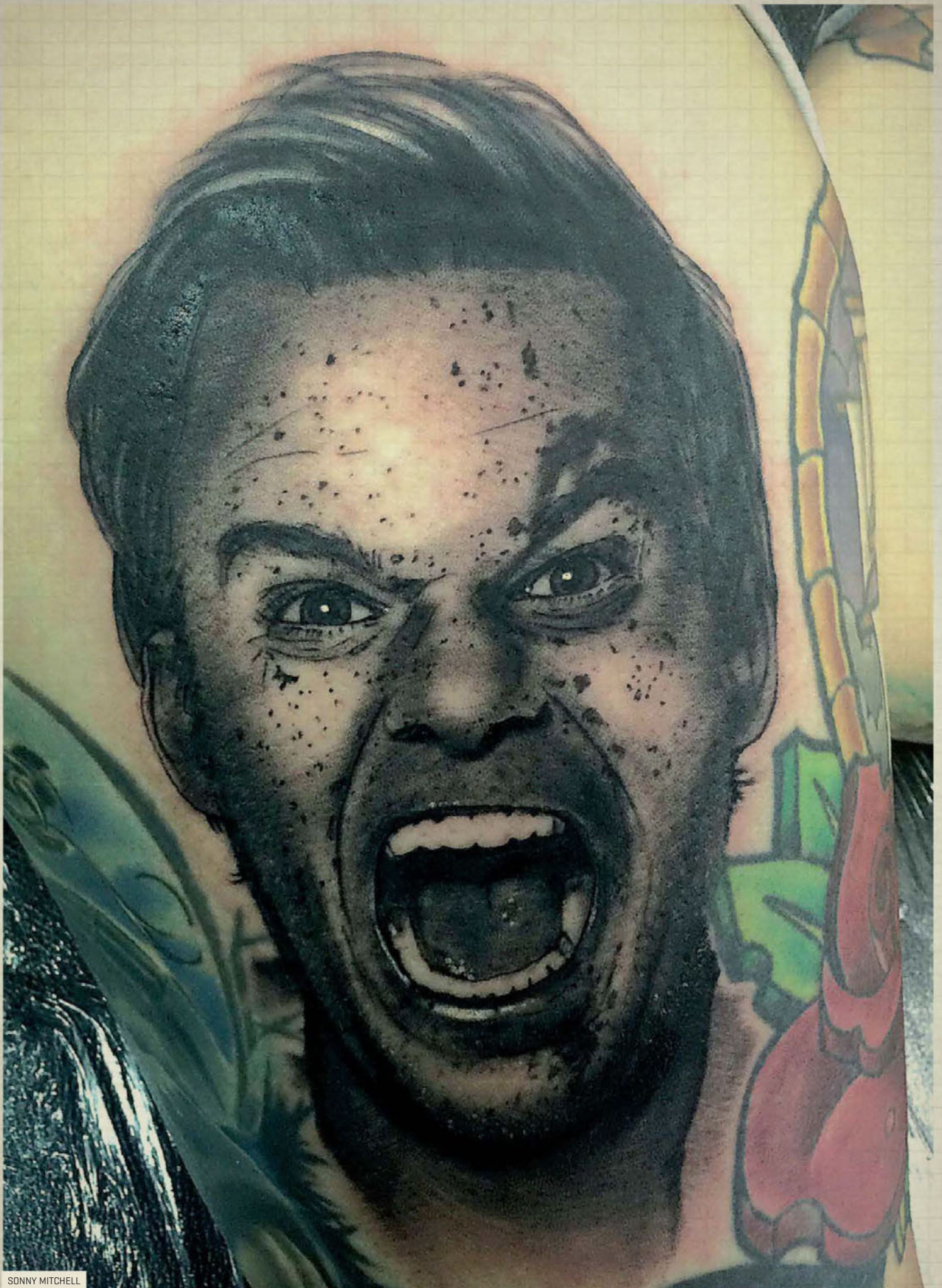
I'd rather have my heart filled with excitement about a piece that I'm doing as opposed as having my pocket full of money for a piece I wasn't excited about

VINCE VILLALVAZO



I think anything that affects your consciousness in a significant way simultaneously affects your life experience. What follows for the artist, is the art

KRIS DAVIDSON



SONNY MITCHELL

Under the SKIN

Dr Mark Burgess is a psychologist with a professional passion for tattooing. In this interview he discusses the complex, deep psychological processes that drive human beings to modify their bodies and explores the dark psyche of tattoo addiction

Where did your professional interest in tattooing begin?

"I'm a psychologist and I became interested in tattoos and tattooing when I was teaching a university class in Canada at the University of Saskatchewan. The class involved students learning about a group or organisation that they were unfamiliar with. Sometimes if you go into a different subculture "blind" as it were, you get to see a whole bunch of meanings and practices that are shared by group-members that become so "taken-for-granted" to them that they almost become invisible. One of the women in the class went down to a local tattoo parlour in Saskatoon – it's called The Eye of the Needle and it's still there – and hung out for about 6 weeks in her spare time, talking to the artists and piercers and the clients and taking notes. The conversations that we had when she got back to class were so good that I thought I'd go down and talk to the artists at the parlour about an idea I had had for a tattoo."

"The consultation was great, the experience was like nothing I had done before and I could really appreciate the deep satisfaction of getting an original piece of artwork on your body. Incidentally, there are a number of excellent ethnographies that have been conducted by researchers who have become involved with tattoo parlours, artists and collectors. For me personally, my subjective experience stimulated me to look into the experience of being tattooed with a more objective perspective and to assess the way in which other people (both the tattooed and the non-tattooed) might view tattooed individuals."

"That was the start point for me and eventually we conducted a relatively simple experiment to test whether people who were tattooed were perceived differently from those who were not tattooed. We set up a situation where it looked like someone was going to pick up an application pack for a job and asked observers to rate that person's suitability for the job (and their personality characteristics), based solely on that very quick first impression of having seen them with the application pack. Previous research has treated all tattoos as though they convey the same information and have the same impact on other people. That's clearly not the case and so that we could test whether the type of tattoo has any significant influence on an observer's perceptions of the tattooed individual we had people collect the job application pack either with no-tattoo, a traditional tribal-style tattoo, or a more colourful and perhaps 'cuter' contemporary tattoo. Our results showed that people with a contemporary tattoo were viewed almost identically to those with no tattoo and that those with a traditional tattoo were seen as being significantly less suitable for the job (and to have more negative personal characteristics too)."

"Interestingly, those observers who had a tattoo themselves (or who were even thinking of getting one) showed no negative bias towards someone with a tattoo at all. Also, women weren't judged differently from men, which is interesting as there was once such a heavy association of tattooing being the preserve of hyper-masculine groups. So, on the one hand we can say that there does seem to

Tattoo addiction

"You can certainly crave, or become addicted to body modifications. Those individuals may get tattoos or other modifications impetuously but they're likely to be impetuous in other aspects of life too, so it may not be entirely associated with the tattoos themselves. They may also really enjoy the physical experience of getting a tattoo and have a constant craving either for the experience itself and many people get a tremor of excitement when they hear the buzz of the needle, or have a constant craving to add to their collection. Here you might see some differences too between people who have no real idea why they have got a new tattoo and those who have less psychologically superficial reasons for getting a tattoo."



REBECCA ORTS



JUKAN

The dark side of tattooing

"I looked into motivations for body modification more generally with another student and what comes through quite clearly is the sheer amount of meaningful reasons that people modify their bodies. These reasons involve enhancing their personal identity in some way, or identifying with their culture, or enhancing some corporeal aspect of their lives (including sexual ones). These reasons could certainly seem quite deep, but seem thoughtful rather than indicative of some underlying psychological malaise. In terms of addiction, we generally get concerned if what people are doing causes them to withdraw from normal social relations, and is associated with constantly thinking about the desired object and consummating that desire to the detriment of finances, relationships, and routine practices. Based on that list you will be able to think of many things that are more problematic and indicative of psychological disorder than tattoos."

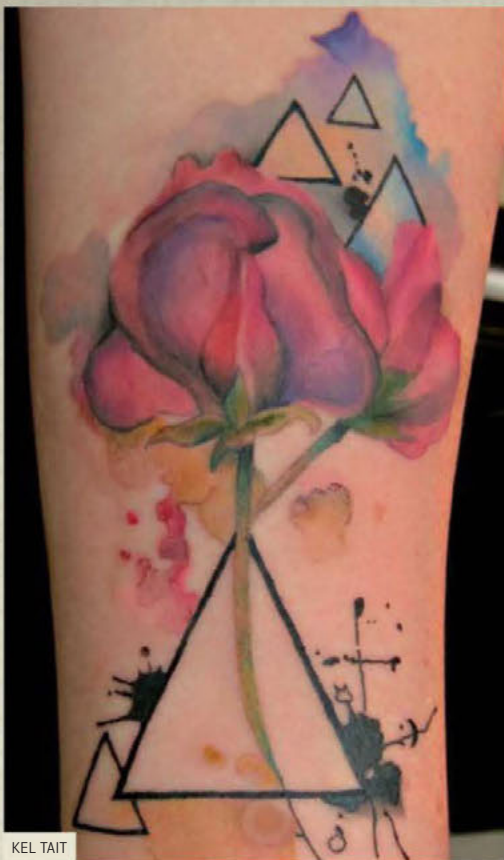
be a new social norm associated with contemporary tattooing inasmuch as tattooed individuals may not be prejudiced against with quite the same strength as previously. On the other hand, not all people with tattoos want to be perceived like the rest of society and those people might take some comfort from the fact that not all tattooed individuals are seen as indistinguishable from the majority who adhere to the so-called "clean-skinned" norm. Regardless, one interesting aspect is that social norms are malleable and open to change over time."

Historically psychoanalysis took a grim view of the motivations behind extensive tattooing. Do you think this is warranted or simply generated by the bias of practitioners?

"There's some interesting new work on this by a psychoanalyst called Abby Stein. One of Stein's patients seemed to recoil in horror at the fact that their therapist had a tattoo! The notion of a tattoo being some infantile desire to express oneself or to smear oneself in faeces or to satisfy a masochistic desire for pain is not one that resonates with me (or Stein). It is interesting that any form of art, whether

it is music, painting, sculpture, or tattooing is a deeply meaningful experience for the artist, but one that also relies on some level of social interaction and evaluation. Someone who is tattooed has often co-created the art. They may have the vision, and the desire to convey a particular personal narrative but it is the artist, the person with the competence to manifest that vision on the canvas of the skin that brings it to life. Each of those creators – the artist and the tattooed – will anticipate the reactions of others (those who will admire the work and those who will admonish it) in the very process of creating it. Even before the tattoo is created, we are thinking of the reactions of other people. Those people's anticipated reactions will form part of our internal mental dialogue about whether we are going to get a tattoo and about what kind of style we want. This is a different type of psycho-dynamic perspective perhaps, but it's certainly true that every aspect of tattooing is a social endeavour and one that can't be reduced simply to the mental dis-function of the person who has the tattoo."

So are psychoanalytical theories that heavy tattooing is the symptom of neurosis and



KEL TAIT

body dysmorphic disorder out dated and founded on ignorance?

"We tried to determine whether there was any relationship between the sheer number of body modifications and their meaning and we could not find any relationship between emotional and/or psychological maladjustment and tattooing or other modifications such as piercing and scarification. Back in the times of Cesare Lombardo (who originally coined the phrase the Savage Origins of Tattooing and was one of the first forensic scientists), an influential contemporary said that a tattooed man would inevitably either be a degenerate or would commit murder at some time in the future. Needless to say, there's no evidence for this either!"

How has such historical bias influenced psychological theories of motivation for body modification?

"It's had quite a marked influence on the perception of those who have body modifications. It's well-documented that Captain James Cook returned to the West with tattooed people indigenous to the Pacific Islands and that these people were paraded as oddities and contrasted with the "civilised" look of Westerners. This and the subsequent lower class adoption of tattooing ensured that tat-



CHRIS GAGNON

toos became identified as primitive and were associated with the underbelly of society."

"It is also true that social norms and beliefs can persist across generations despite their being little evidence for their survival. There are some interesting psychological studies that have demonstrated this, with completely naïve individuals who have no idea or experience of previous social circumstances soaking up a "social truth" passed on by others, simply because it is shared or common knowledge and does not come under greater scrutiny and is not challenged as being groundless."

"Media coverage has also helped increase the social acceptability to an extent. Tattoo parlours, or boutiques even, have been the focus of mainstream press and television documentaries. Some people who are tattooed may not like to use the term "fashion" because of the relative permanence of their art-work, but high-profiled celebrities are often tattooed and this is another sign of tattoos moving into the mainstream."

"So, it's an interesting time; the variety of people and tattoos are increasing and the reasons for this cannot be reduced to simple pathologies. If anything, body modification may be associated with quite creative and inspiring levels of thought about one's Self, one's body and one's existence. At the same time it's very difficult to completely overcome the critical eye of the non-modified other as he or she gazes upon the tattooed individual." ▣

Women, Tattoos and the Mainstream

"There is quite a range of body modification practices that are available for people these days. So much so, that they probably don't even see some of them as being body modification. That, and the leap in popularity of non-Western philosophies from about the 1980s on has been considered to be influential in the rise of tattooing popularity. Once women became involved in tattooing in larger numbers than they had before it helped to chip away at tattoos being seen as the domain of bikers, criminals and the military (among other masculine outsider groups). I know that some practitioners and scholars consider women to be important for the progress of tattooing in demanding a different range of styles, quality and colours of tattoos. In itself, this exposes people to a greater range of types of tattoos and a greater range of types of people who have them, which inevitably challenges any sense that all tattooed people are the same (although it can't be denied that some of that still persists among some individuals). It also presents a range of body modification possibilities for other people to engage with in terms of creating something meaningful for them personally on their own bodies."

Dr Mark Burgess is a senior psychology lecturer at Oxford Brookes University. Aside from tattoos Mark's recent work has focussed on people's transition from a life of peace to a life of violence as a member of a terrorist group. This work has been published in international journals, has led to invited talks by the British Military and has been presented at United Nations workshops devoted to understanding the development of insurgency and the development of potential counter-insurgency strategies.





PIZZA & DONUTS

Trading his studies in science and mathematics for the culinary world, Chef Jeff Mahin launched his career in New York and San Francisco before joining Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck in Berkshire as a laboratory assistant. Today, Mahin is back Stateside establishing a name for himself with seriously addictive pizzas and donuts. Making Zagat's 30 Under 30 list didn't hurt him any either.

www.JeffMahin.com

"It was the first environment I ever really felt comfortable," says Chef Jeff Mahin of his first foray into a kitchen, even if actual cooking wasn't involved at the time. "There was a mash of chaos and excitement and structure that really fit well with me—it was creative yet disciplined."

He got his start "being a dishwasher and having the time of my life, not knowing anything about a restaurant. Then someone handed me a knife and I was able to cut things and listen to loud music and I was soaking wet at the end of the shift, but I had such a fun time doing it that I never really felt like it was work."

Enrolling in the California Culinary Academy at age 17, Mahin always had a knack for cooking and an inkling he might eventually end up spending most of his life in a

kitchen, but he didn't exactly listen to his gut at first. Taking a break from food, he went on to study science and mathematics at the University of California, Berkley before realising it would be way more exhilarating to pursue his first career choice.

"Obviously, I wasn't getting paid very much and dropping out of a very prestigious school to become a line cook was scary, but I think the sacrifice of doing anything you love makes you who you are later," he says, adding that "the sacrifices made felt justified because I was doing what I wanted to do." Starting his fine dining career

was anything but smooth sailing, though. "I had never worked on that kind of level of cuisine before—I would wake up with nightmares," he admits. "There were harder jobs running a kitchen and being a lead-

**THE SACRIFICE OF
DOING ANYTHING YOU
LOVE MAKES YOU WHO
YOU ARE LATER**

Words: Barbara Pavone



Rey Lopez



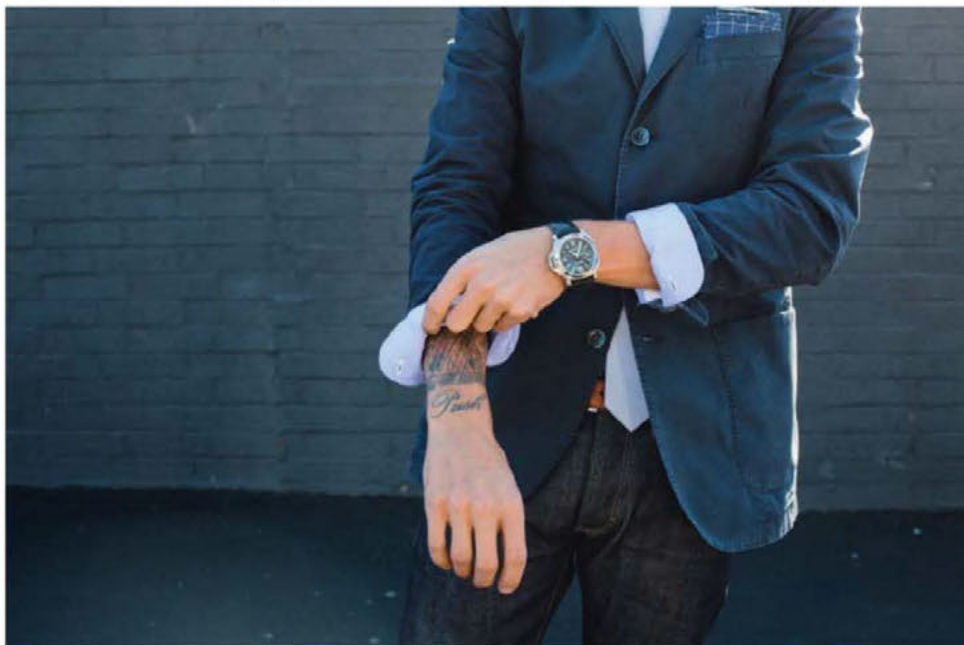
Anjali Pinto



Anjali Pinto



Anjali Pinto



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN VERY SELF-MOTIVATED, WHETHER IT'S BEEN POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, AND I'VE ALWAYS BEEN MY BIGGEST CRITIC

Chef Mahin In Pizza Form

If Stella Barra Pizzeria was to feature a pizza representing Mahin, what would it be? "I don't think it would be good, but it would have a lot of yellow mustard on it!" he laughs

er but this was a scary experience. Every day I came in thinking I wasn't going to make it."

"But it got easier. I became more comfortable. It was my first real scary 'Uh-oh, I'm in way over my head' moment, but the biggest lesson [I took away] in doing something for the first time is that it is always scary but the more comfortable you get, the more you start to learn and it becomes easier. Any time I've ever done something new, pursued a new dish a new restaurant, etc., I understood the first few days and even the first few months were going to be scary."

After working at some of the most prestigious restaurants in New York and San Francisco, Mahin eventually moved to England to join the team at three Michelin starred restaurant The Fat Duck and while there, participated in BBC's "In Search of Perfection" documentary alongside Duck's celebrity chef, Heston Blumenthal.

Fast forward about a decade and Mahin

now has four of his own restaurants scattered across eight Stateside locations, including Stella Barra Pizzeria serving artisanal pizza, Summer House Santa Monica rocking a menu of local and seasonal ingredients, M Street Kitchen offering a big dose of American comfort food and, my personal favourite, Do-Rite Donuts, i.e. Heaven.

Although he very humbly stands by the fact that he has yet to master the art of cooking—"I learn something new every day"—he's clearly doing something right, as he made the prestigious Zagat 30 Under 30 and Forbes 30 Under 30 lists in 2012.

"It came as a bit of a shock," says Mahin. "I've always been very self-motivated, whether it's been positive or negative, and I've always been my biggest critic. If I feel good about something and someone notices, though, it makes me feel good—I was very happy to be honoured."

No matter how much success comes his way, however, it seems that having second thoughts is rather normal when you own your business and Mahin certainly isn't immune. "It's a career of passion—it's not the easiest job—and you question it a bunch,



Anjali Pinto



Rey Lopez



Rey Lopez



Rey Lopez



especially when you're overworked or really tired. I think with cooking the saying 'The grass is always greener' applies."

"Would it be easier to get a job where I don't work until midnight and get up at six in the morning? Maybe. Is there attraction of doing something else? 100%. Would I be as happy? Probably not. It's a job I love so much I can't see myself doing anything else."

Food Culture

Early on, it was all about fine dining, then, just like with switching from science to food, Mahin decided to turn things around and shift focus, paving the way for his signature offering: Pizza. Which, believe it or not, went through 30 different variations before the recipe for its infamous crust was settled on. So why the sudden change?

"I got to a point, and it was a personal preference, I wanted to get away from who I was becoming and how much of an ego I had acquired by doing fine dining," admits Mahin. "I was feeling really burnt out. I remember my first job as a dishwasher how exciting it was and I was a bit love-lost with fine dining."

"I was really interested in bread and dough and I thought that the most straightforward and simple cuisine to do with dough was pizza. I wanted to never wear a fancy chef's coat again and just have fun. That's what Stella Barra became: A loud, fun, cool place I wanted to work at and be at. It was good representation of myself."

WOULD IT BE EASIER TO GET A JOB WHERE I DON'T WORK UNTIL MIDNIGHT AND GET UP AT SIX IN THE MORNING? MAYBE

Do-Rite Donuts opened in Chicago with the same goal in mind when Mahin teamed up with Chef Francis Brennan. "We grew up in the same town and had your run-of-the-mill donut shop and had the same memories of that place being really great. We spent a lot of time messing around at the fine dining restaurants with donuts, trying to figure out what to do with them. It was sort of a joke, but it worked!" he laughs.

Today, Mahin has restaurants in Santa Monica, Hollywood, Chicago and North Bethesda, and he splits his time accordingly. "They're like children, when they're young and they haven't been around a long time, I spend more time there and help develop the team and the menu," he explains. "As they get older and start running on their own, I can focus my attention on other stores."

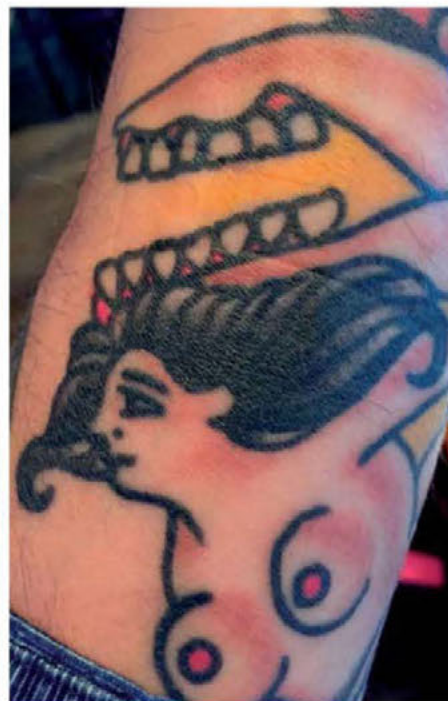
"Food is an essential part of every city and it's really unique as a chef to learn the people and then produce the food," he continues. "Every city has a staple and every city has a culture and if you don't know it, you'll never be able to cook the food that appeals to the people who live there. I think what's fun about having restaurants all over the country is that you can have dishes that suc-

Chef Mahin On Inspiration

It's more actions than individuals that define inspiration. I'm inspired riding my bicycle in the morning in the mountains in L.A. - I find a lot of clarity there. I also find inspiration in random acts of kindness.



Rey Lopez



I HAVE WANTON DESIRES TO DO MORE AND DO UNIQUE AND INTERESTING THINGS WITH FOOD, BUT RIGHT NOW EVERY DAY I FOCUS ON MY RESTAURANTS AND HOW TO MAKE THEM BETTER

Chef Mahin In Donut Form

If Do-Rite Donuts was to feature a donut representing Mahin, what would it be? "We already have that on the menu: Old-fashioned vanilla bean glaze. Put it on a bicycle and then it's the Jeff Mahin donut!"

ceed on one coast not succeed on another, and you learn the culture of the community that way."

Kitchen Ink

Getting his first tattoo when he was just 16—"My friends and I did them on each other"—Mahin is a classic case of never wanting, or being willing, to stop at one. Something that was solidified in stone when, at 18, he "met a guy who was totally covered in tattoos and he was 75! I randomly talked to him and he told me a story that I still remember to this day."

"He always wanted tattoos but his wife didn't really like them, so when she died, he decided to move to Japan and find the best tattoo artist and do a full body tattoo. It was such beautiful artwork. Part of what made it beautiful is you couldn't buy or sell it. You have to sit there with the artist and make a connection. If there's a wrong brushstroke, it's there forever."

Completely in awe of and totally inspired by tattooing's beauty and power as an art form, Mahin set out to beef up his own collection. "I met a guy named Jason Phillips who

owned a tattoo shop in Oakland called FTW. I was like 20 years old and he drew a sleeve for me and he was amazing. I didn't even know or appreciate how good he was at the time. After many sessions, I got to know him and he was such a good guy. I've gone back to him primarily for all my other pieces, including my entire left rib, which is a geisha based on a short story. There's also Jason Stores in Los Angeles who I've gone to for some black and white work."

"The latest of my tattoos I got with a friend, David Kaplan, in New York. We intended on getting small tattoos that would take 30 minutes. However, we met a gentleman and he made these great bended woman skull tattoos and he drew a pizza paddle chef one for me and it turned into quite a sizeable tattoo and ruined my dinner plans because it took so long," he laughs.

It likely won't be the last time that happens, either. "It's a work in progress," he says of his collection, admitting he's always dreaming about new ink. "I like neck tattoos but I can't say I'll get one soon!"

As for the imminent future, it holds something almost as exciting as a new tattoo: "I'm going to peel some rhubarb," laughs Mahin. "I don't know what's next. I kind of take it day by day. I have wanton desires to do more and do unique and interesting things with food, but right now every day I focus on my restaurants and how to make them better. Or just on peeling rhubarb." ▣





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a story of nepal

Many tattooists and travellers on the Asian roads were looking forward to participate in the 5th International Tattoo Convention in Kathmandu, Nepal, a special event in the global tattoo scene calendar. But the giant earthquake that shook the country around lunch time on Saturday, April 25th ended the convention prematurely.

More than 8700 people lost their lives, half a million homes were destroyed, entire villages have disappeared, more than a quarter of the country's population—some 8 million people—were directly affected by the catastrophe. The already desperate situation was further aggravated by countless aftershocks and a second strong quake on May 12th. Some of the participating artists chose to remain in Nepal to lend a hand with relief projects or helped raise funds for Nepalese affected by the quake—projects that readers of Skin Deep can support. Here's an eyewitness account of the first two days of the convention and its sudden end, buffered by the incredible story of Chris Powers, an American hobo tattooist who fell in love with Nepal.



The ballroom of the Yak and Yeti hotel saw its first visitors in 1953, the year the mythical Himalayan kingdom first opened its temples and palaces to the world. Two generations later, the luxury caravansary in the heart of the Nepalese capital was hosting the fifth International Nepal Tattoo Convention, only to be severely shaken by the earthquake... but in spite of the catastrophe, the convention's organizers are not giving up.

On Friday morning, April 24th, Swiss tattooist Johann Morel (Steel Work Shop) sat waiting for his first customers, his flashes on the table in front of him, "I am really looking forward to doing work here because I will donate all the money I make to Saathi, an association which helps women and children in Kathmandu. I don't need the money; right after the convention I have a guest spot in Hong Kong and back home in Switzerland I have a twelve month waiting list. I charge 20 GBP a tattoo and I hope that I can raise at least 350 GBP. I've never felt so welcome at a tattoo convention and Mohan Gurung's team, the organisers, is amazing."

For most participating artists, Nepal is 'different'. Many of the attending tattooists live on the road and they don't come for business—Nepal is a poor country and Nepalese can't afford international tattoo rates—but for the expe-



rience. In the last few years, Kathmandu has become the 'cool' convention: You can hippie around in bare feet on the hotel's terrace with artists and punters who have managed to cross the highest mountain range in the world to get here.

The event is popular with a diverse crowd—tourists, trekkers, adherents of the Goa trance scene and UN diplomats as well as local families and groups of young Nepalese—because of its effervescent ambience; it's no longer the domain of shady Kathmandu gangsters and hard men. Nepalese society has become more open to global counter culture in recent years. There's room for self expression in early 21st century Nepal.

While children in ethnic costumes handed out flower petals to visitors and traditional dancers graced the convention's stage, a crowd of curious onlookers gathered



Paulo and Ari tattooed Nepalese looking for protective tattoos, on the banks of the Bagmati River at Pashupatinath, a Hindu holy site and the most auspicious location to burn the dead.



How to help Nepal?

This list is far from comprehensive, but if you would like to help, these are some of the bigger charities involved in aid relief:

actionaid.org.uk

The agency has reached more than 48,500 people so far with emergency aid including food, medicine, tarpaulins and hygiene kits. ActionAid aims to scale up its outreach over the coming months, including plans to build "safe spaces" for women and children who can be particularly vulnerable after natural disasters.

internationalmedicalcorps.org.uk/nepal

International Medical Corps workers are providing emergency care to survivors, as well as delivering much-needed medical supplies. The organisation has opened a mobile medical unit in Ghorka, near the earthquake epicentre, with plans to expand to other affected areas.

donate.vso.org.uk/nepal

VSO is raising funds to support its existing programmes and to recruit skilled volunteers to help communities recover. This includes emergency education spaces for children, sending highly skilled healthcare professionals to hospitals and for trauma counselling, and damage assessment in remote areas.

You can also check out Tattoo Aid for Nepal, which helps fund Direct Relief, an NGO focusing on medical emergencies at directrelief.org

here in nepal, it's mostly the local musicians who want tattoos. they are very open and want to have fun as in any society where the voice of the youth has been muzzled for too long

around the stall of Iestyn Flye (Divine Canvas) as the British artist who specialises in scarification etched a design onto the chest of a young Nepalese who sat through the ordeal with gritted teeth.

Eric Jason D Souza (Iron Buzz Tattoos) won the first prize of the first day's contest for a portrait of a woman inked on his partner's forearm. The young couple who travel

led from Mumbai for the third year running was ecstatic. "It's great to be recognised here because tattooing in India still struggles with quality issues. For the past two or three years, there's been a huge tattoo boom in India and there are some 15,000 shops but only about 150 professional artists. We work hard on a project with the local government to make tattooing a more professional career choice."



[Tom Vater] Work by Lion King Tattoo Studio, Taiwan

by the time the earth had stopped shaking, the entire convention found itself in the hotel car park watching the cracks in the yak and yeti's facade

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directrelief.org

On Saturday morning, April 25th, French artist Guy le Tatooer, who has spent his working life on the road, was slowly warming up to the convention scene. "I started attending these events for the first time this year—I will be in Borneo, in London and in Florence in the coming months. Here in Nepal, it's mostly the local musicians who want tattoos. They are very open and want to have fun as in any society where the voice of the youth has been muzzled for too long. If the work is well done, the Nepalese, a highly artistic people, appreciate it."

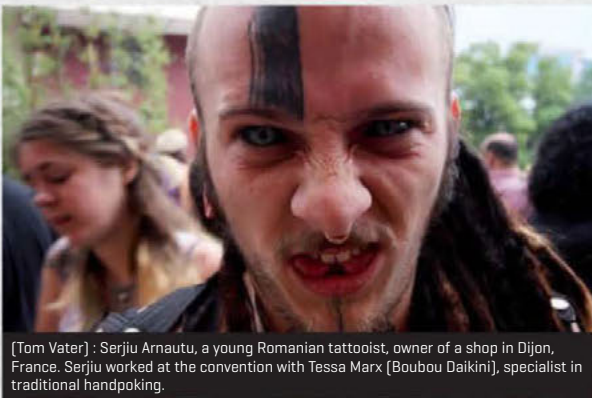
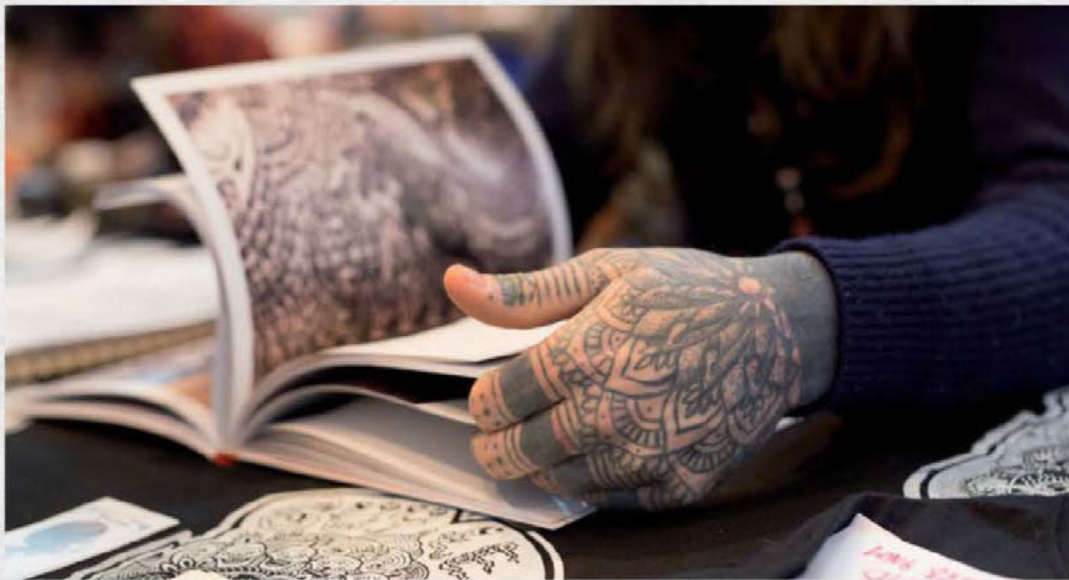
As Guy finished his sentence, the lights in the ballroom went off, a second later everything started to shake violently. Artists, punters and hotel staff stampeded from the room or tried to find shelter under door frames as stalls collapsed. The quake rattled on for 80 seconds. By the time the earth had stopped



[Tom Vater] Iestyn Flye and Dasha [Divine Canvas]

shaking, the entire convention found itself in the hotel car park watching the cracks in the Yak and Yeti's façade, deep in shock but happy to be alive. Ajarn Man, a Thai sak yant tattoo master handed out Buddhist clay amulets for good luck.

The days following the quake were harsh—countless aftershocks, tense streets, a dazed population, and periodic phone and Internet shut downs created incredible despair and sadness in the Nepalese capital. Some fifteen tattoo artists chose to stay in the city to try and help with relief operations and to support their local friends. Several artists traveled to Pashupatinath, the sacred Hindu temple complex on the shores of the Bagmati River to tattoo Nepalese who were seeking protection, against a backdrop of long rows



[Tom Vater]: Serjiu Arnautu, a young Romanian tattooist, owner of a shop in Dijon, France. Serjiu worked at the convention with Tessa Marx (Boubou Daikini), specialist in traditional handpoking.

of funeral pyres where families brought loved ones they had lost in the quake. Other artists raised funds to buy emergency supplies or to contribute to projects set up to construct toilets and temporary shelters in villages around the Kathmandu Valley. In New York, London, Copenhagen, Bangkok, Southampton, Les Vans, Rottweil and other cities around the world, local tattooists began to organise events to help finance reconstruction efforts.

French tattooists Max Well and Angie stayed on for two weeks before moving on to

“we are sure we will host the convention again next year. we know we will, with all the overwhelming support we got from the tattoo community, for us and for nepal”

work at Six Fathoms Deep in Bangkok, Thailand. “We first came to Nepal for last year’s convention and it really changed our lives. The event has a real magic, it feels like one great family. We will go back soon, we have to finish the tattoos we started there. In the meantime we try to help from a distance by sending money. And if the convention returns next year we will be there.”

Mohan Gurung and Bijay Shrestha, the convention’s organisers, remain determined. “We are sure we will host the convention again next year. We know we will, with all the overwhelming support we got from the tattoo community, for us and for Nepal. We must continue this family tradition forever.” ▣



Chris Powers is a hobo tattooist, a visual road warrior, an illustrated drifter and a conjurer of imagery he sees in puddles by the side of the road, in the world's last filling stations and the shadows of tattoo parlours. One day, he will walk into your shop, sit down to open his sketch book or roll up his sleeves and invite you into his world. A while later, he will get up and leave the room. Whether he'll return is up to the gods

Powers, 44, was born in Richmond, Virginia. At age 14, he moved to Greensboro, North Carolina with his mother, a teacher and artist, and started tattooing soon after.

Since then he has traveled through Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia and the U.S., working his way across continents, leaving traces of his narratives and dreams on the skins of those he meets. Drawing influences from eastern and western cultures, his work features unique pattern styles and shading techniques.

He's a lanky guy, with a modest and self-contained way to go about things. His voice is pure southern fried, heavy with desire for redemption and an acute awareness that we're all cursed.

"I started tattooing when I was kid. I used to steal copies of Outlaw Biker Magazine which had some nudity, so you couldn't buy them if you were a kid. I saw work by Filip

Leu and Felix Leu. I didn't know who these artists were at the time. Later I realised that they had become big influences on my work."

Powers drift into the profession was typically informal. "I was sitting in a basement, making bongos, watching MTV with some friends. I had a needle and some India ink, so I tattooed a friend's leg while listening to The

Replacements. Then, when I was 18 I studied scene painting at the North Carolina School of Arts. I shared a house at the time and anytime anyone was on acid and

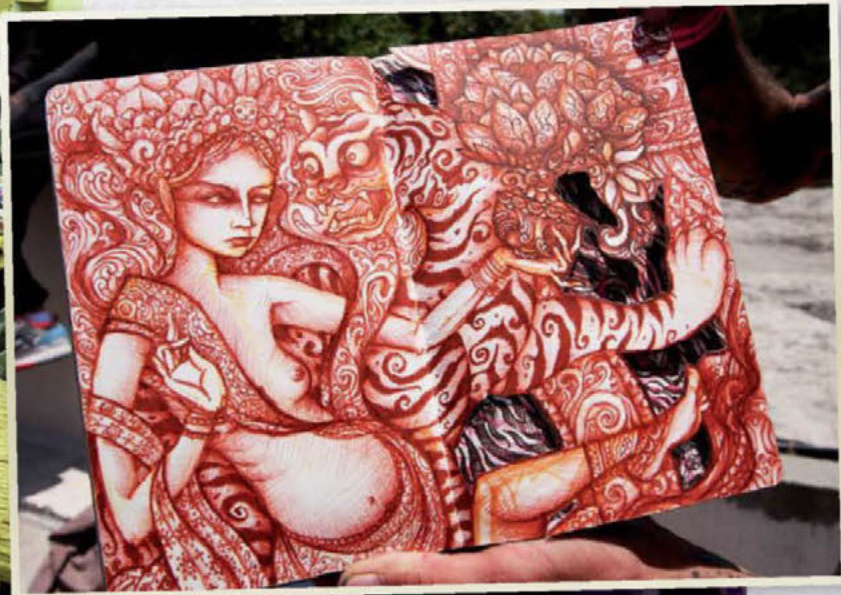
*i loved the painting but the rest
...my favourite teacher suggested
i leave. he felt my path was
somewhere else. he was right*

was having a bad night I would do a little tattoo on them. I soon dropped out of school though. I loved the painting but the rest.... my favourite teacher suggested I leave. He felt my path was somewhere else. He was right."

In 1991 Powers acquired a credit card, maxed it and traveled to Amsterdam and Prague where he lived on the



when these guys returned they would get very different tattoos from the ones they set off with, like memorials for their fallen friends



streets with gutter punks.

Back in the US in the early 90s, Powers still had dreams to become a newspaper cartoonist—Edward Gorey was his idol, but he had no idea how to go about it. Instead he ordered a tattoo kit out of the back of a magazine and tattooed his thighs. He quickly realised he needed a teacher if he wanted to make a living working the style that was popular in the '90s—traditional/new school with lots of colour and big lines.

"I was lucky, I met Barry Walker who opened a shop called Inkwell Tattoos in Winston, Salem. He told me he'd teach me for a year if I worked for him for a year afterwards. I stayed at his shop for four years."

Powers, eventually worn out by the road, returned to Inkwell Tattoos in Winston in 2002, where he would remain for another eight years.

"I tattooed a lot of military in those days. I tattooed guys before or after boot camp. The 1st Air Cav trained in North Carolina, so I did plenty of yellow shields with the black horse. There was patriotic fever. But most of the guys who joined just wanted a chance to kill. My friend Kevin joined because it was a chance to change his life. He had a lot of anger in him and wanted to kill someone. He did three tours and was shot ten times kicking down doors in Baghdad. Now he has severe post traumatic stress. So, when these guys returned they would get very different tattoos from the ones they set off with, like memorials for their fallen friends."

In 2010, Power's mother passed away and, fulfilling her

last wish, he took her ashes to Nepal. "I was burned out on tattooing but Nepal gave me new energy. I fell in love with the country, its people, its architecture. I started working at Jad's in Kathmandu."

Back in Salem in 2012, Powers used his new found energy to open a private studio which he ran for two years. "I didn't want a street shop. I was able to focus more on arty work and not have to crank out so much because it was by appointment only."

In 2014, Powers decided to return to Nepal and he has since worked three stints at Jad's, but over the years, both Powers' style and techniques have changed.

"I pay great attention to how my work ages. I learn a lot about what I did right and what I did wrong. I used to be known for colour work, big tattooed pin up girls. Now I always execute my work in the most simple way possible. Not too many shades of grey, I draw strong lines. If there's too many details, it will fade. I am not dissing this technique. But if you keep it basic, you're forced to make your drawing style more unique. And I am getting more into tattooing by hand, without machines."



i pay great attention to how my work ages. i learnt a lot about what i did right and what i did wrong ... now i always execute my work in the most simple way possible

Parallel to his tattooing career, Powers continued to work as an illustrator. He had his first solo show in Winston, Salem at Delurk Gallery last year and there's a graphic novel in the works. He's rather reticent of the dream worlds he creates on canvas and skin—nightmarish Gormenghast-like scenes of twisted maidens and supernatural swirls. "I do big drawings. I use Faber Castel and Utrecht pens."

But the list of influences he quotes is endless and eclectic—from Grosz and Bosch to George Herriman who created Crazy Cat in the 1920s. "If I could pull a line the way that man could I would be a very happy person. He uses five lines and it's perfect."

Perhaps there is another, deeper reason why Powers pursues two careers, "There's always been this fear that one day no one will want to get tattooed anymore. One day people might wake up and think, 'fuck it!'"

Powers also lists Aubrey Beardsley, William Heath Robinson, and Arthur Rackham as major influences and he's a fan of Thomas Pynchon, Fugazi, Ali Farka Touré, The Meat Puppets, The Talking Heads and Serge Gainsbourg.

On the road, Powers fol-

lows the blue lines. He has studied traditional tattooing in Tahiti, Thailand and New Zealand.

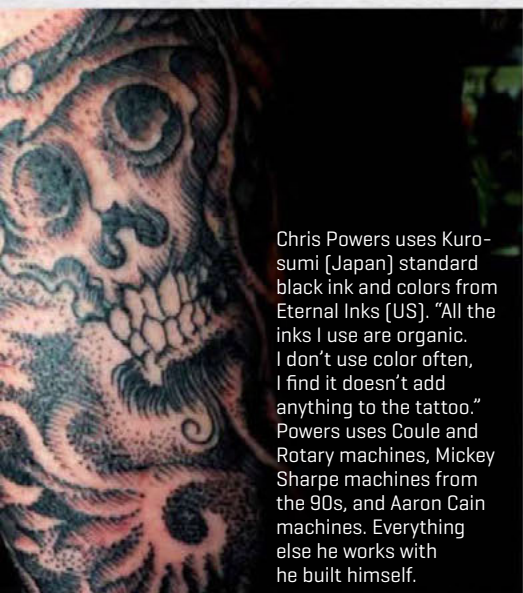
"I love all forms of tattooing. Most traditional tattooists who do their own thing are happy to share it. They are not concerned solely by commercialism. In Tahiti I found tattoo traditions catering to the tourist trade. But these traditions still existed in their own name, they were still well done."

"I used to do a lot of conventions in Germany and the US. But I got tired of the crowds. Kathmandu is a little different. Artists don't come for the money and since Mohan has been in New York, a lot of American tattoo artists come here. It's more trendy and hip than the bigger events in Europe and the US."

Powers remains attached to Nepal. On April 25th, that attachment was severely tested. In the immediate aftermath of the quake, he got together with other tattooists visiting the stricken country, raised money, bought emergency supplies and drove them out to devastated villages.

"The earthquake was scary and tragic but it hasn't changed my focus. I still want to live here. I want to help. I will still be working with my friends at Jad's. My back piece will be finished."

Powers is at the door, his torn and frayed canvas bag slung across his shoulder. He's ready to head off. A few years ago, he would have slipped away in silence. But after more than two decades on the road, he has become more contemplative. "When you're a young tattooist, you have a lot of cash and you make stupid decisions. As I got older, I focused back on the art. The only things going on in my head nowadays are robots, aliens and naked girls, all as cartoons." ■



Chris Powers uses Kurosumi (Japan) standard black ink and colors from Eternal Inks (US). "All the inks I use are organic. I don't use color often, I find it doesn't add anything to the tattoo," Powers uses Coule and Rotary machines, Mickey Sharpe machines from the 90s, and Aaron Cain machines. Everything else he works with he built himself.

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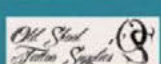
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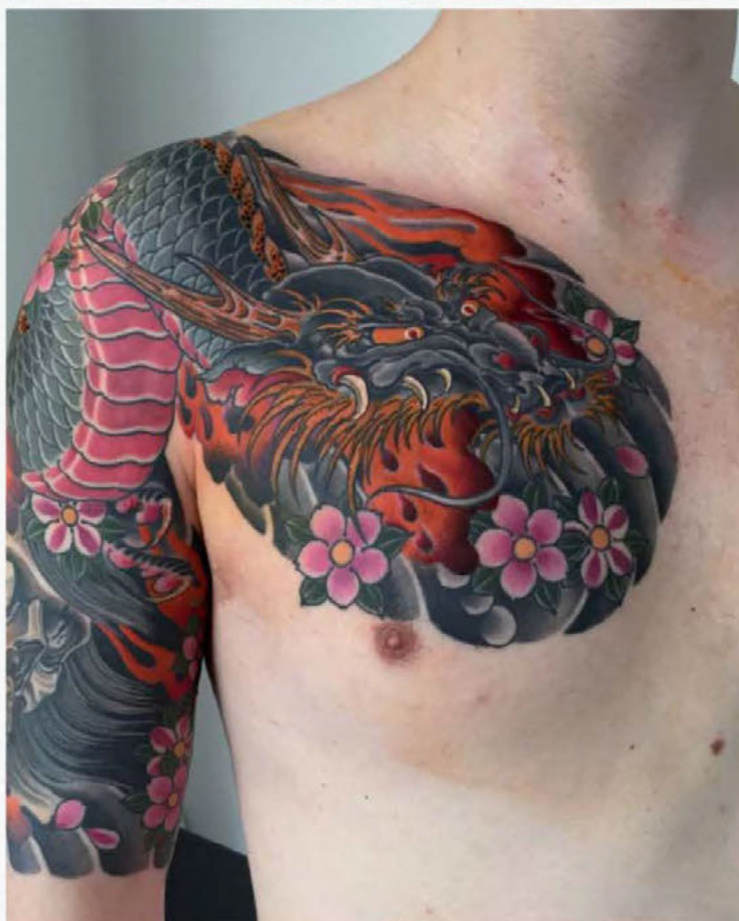
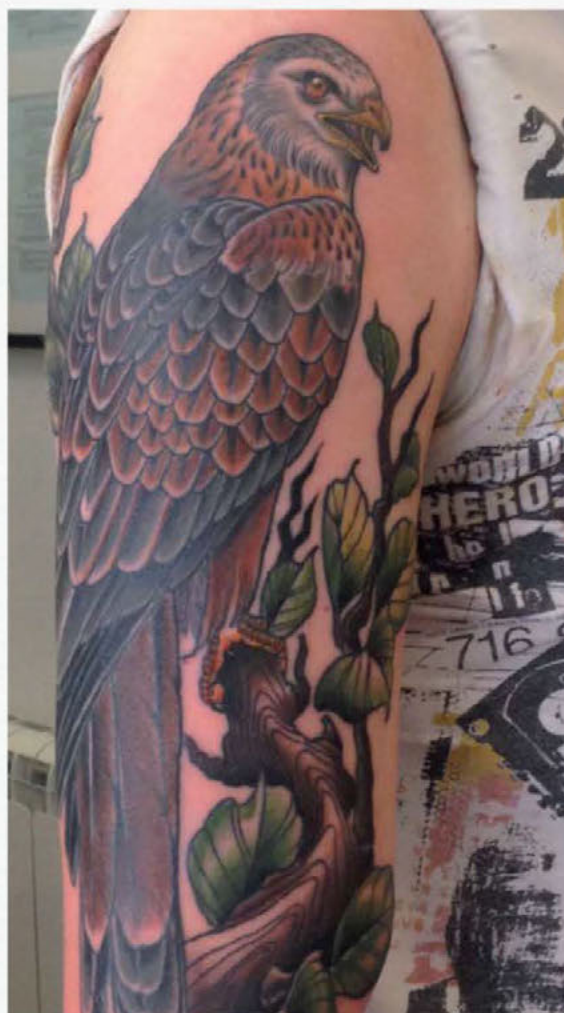
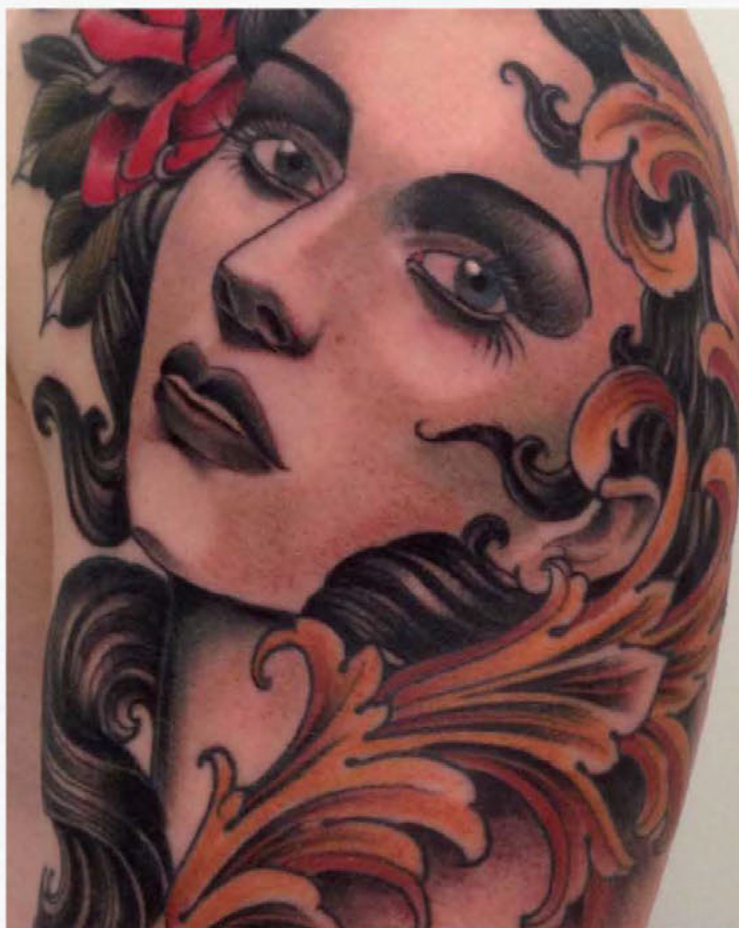
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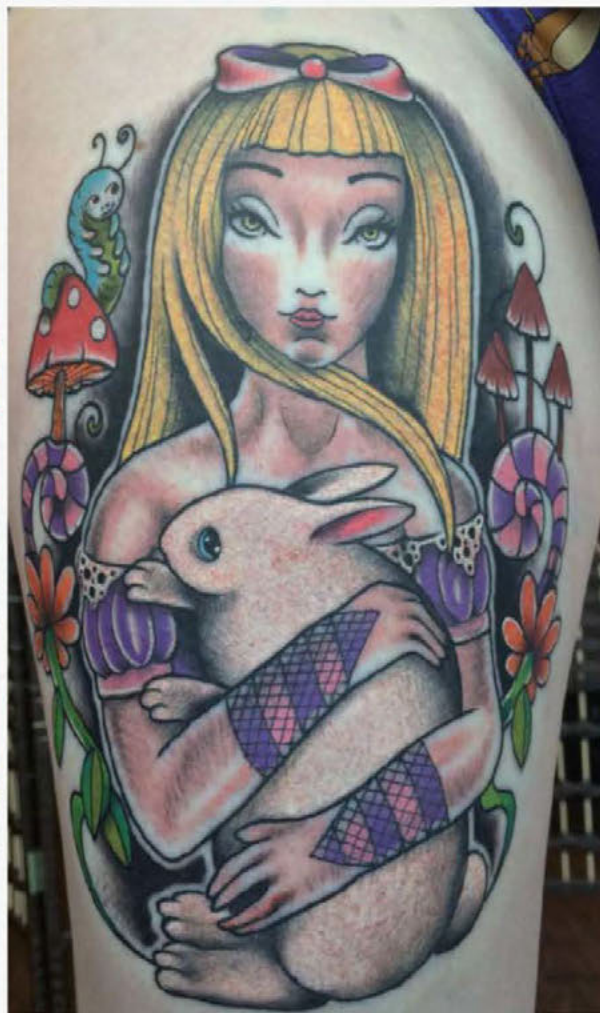
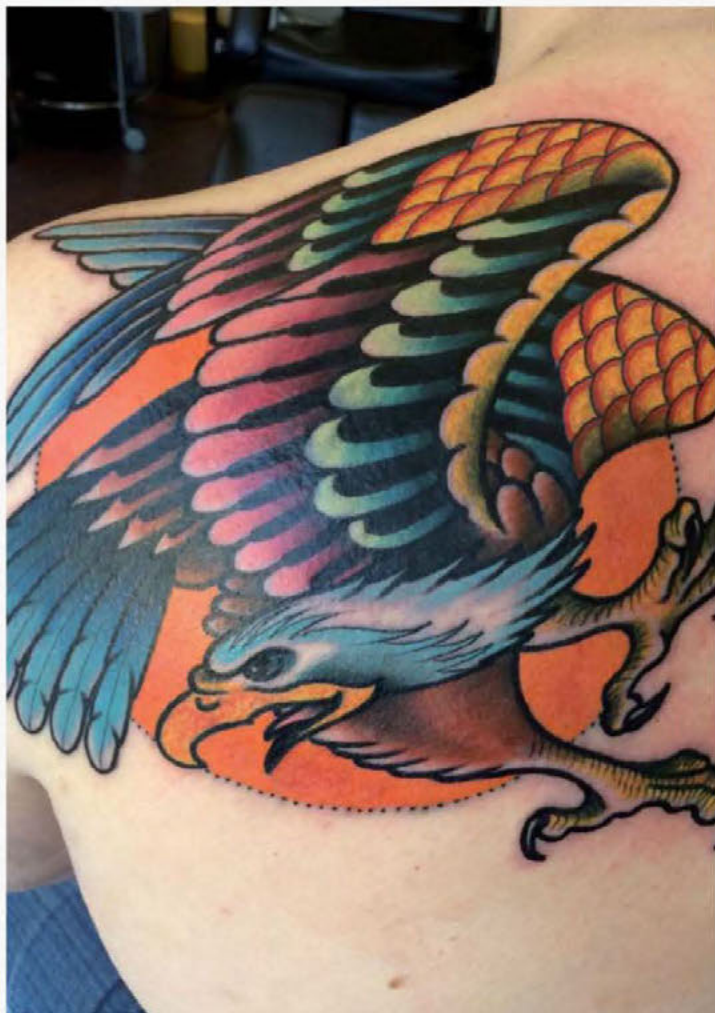
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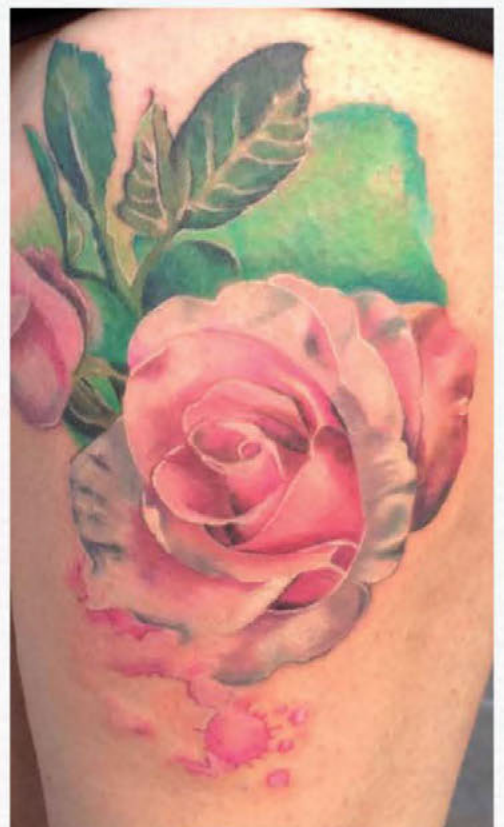


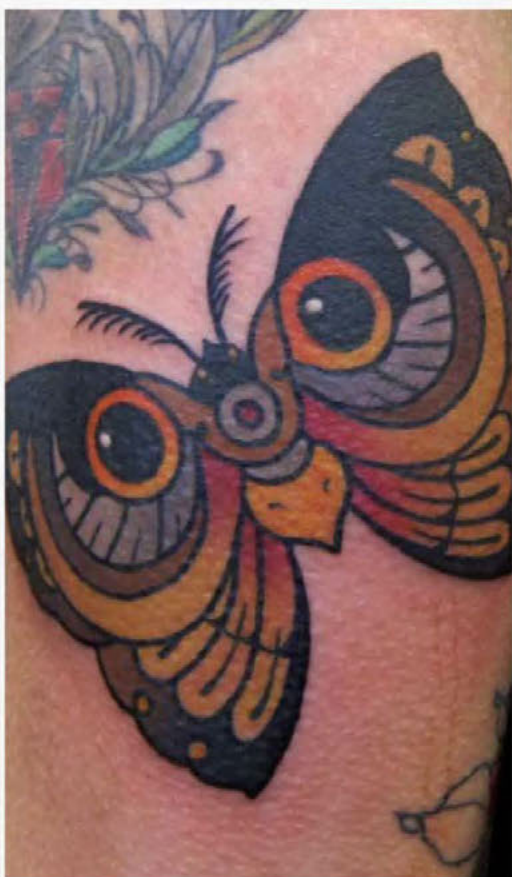
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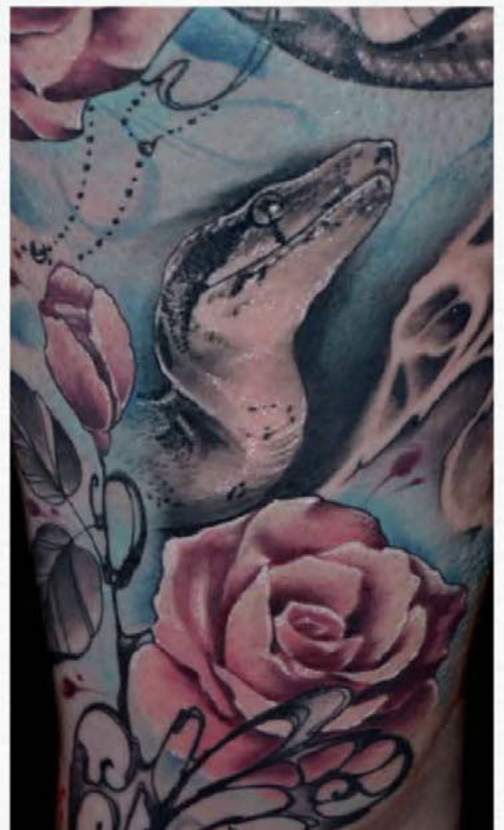
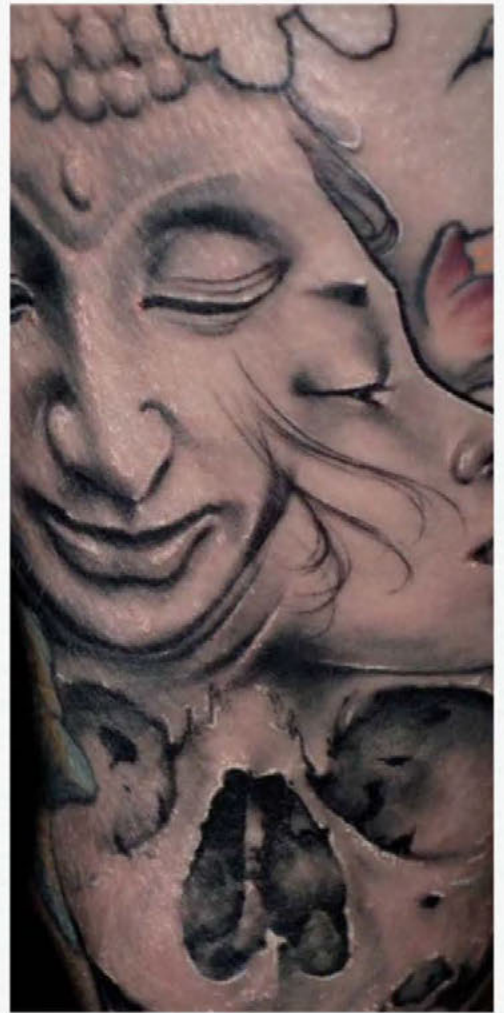
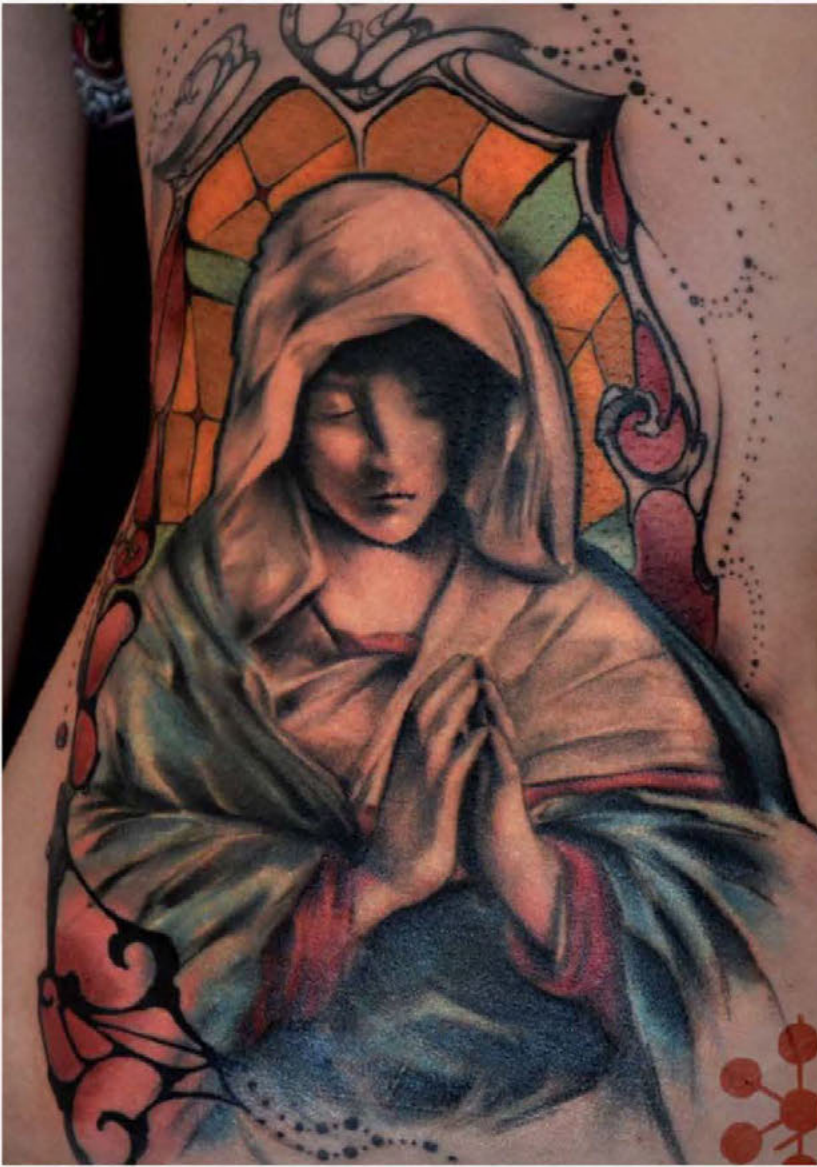


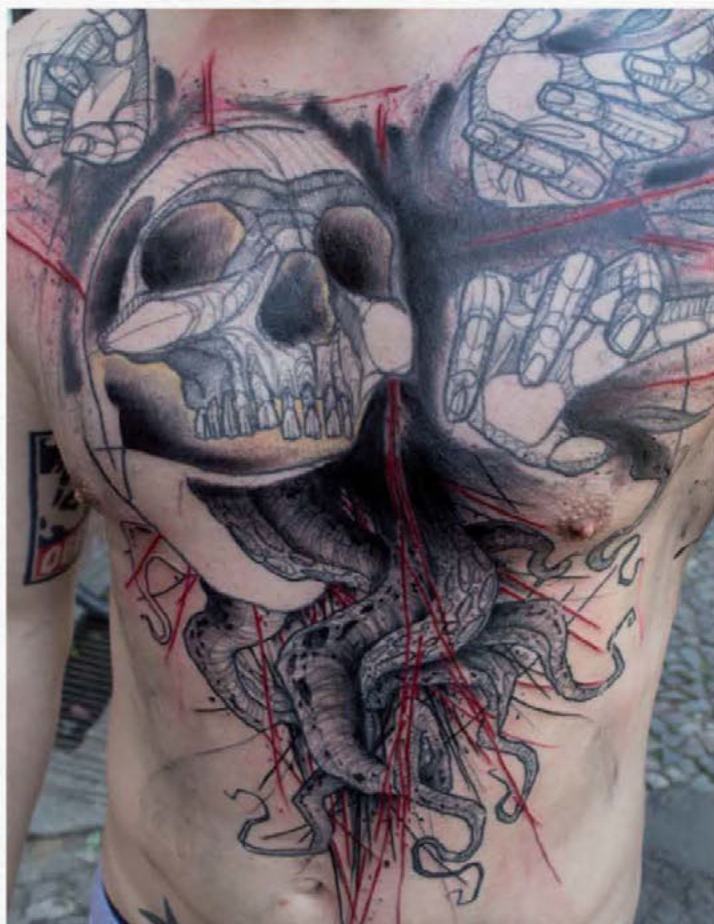
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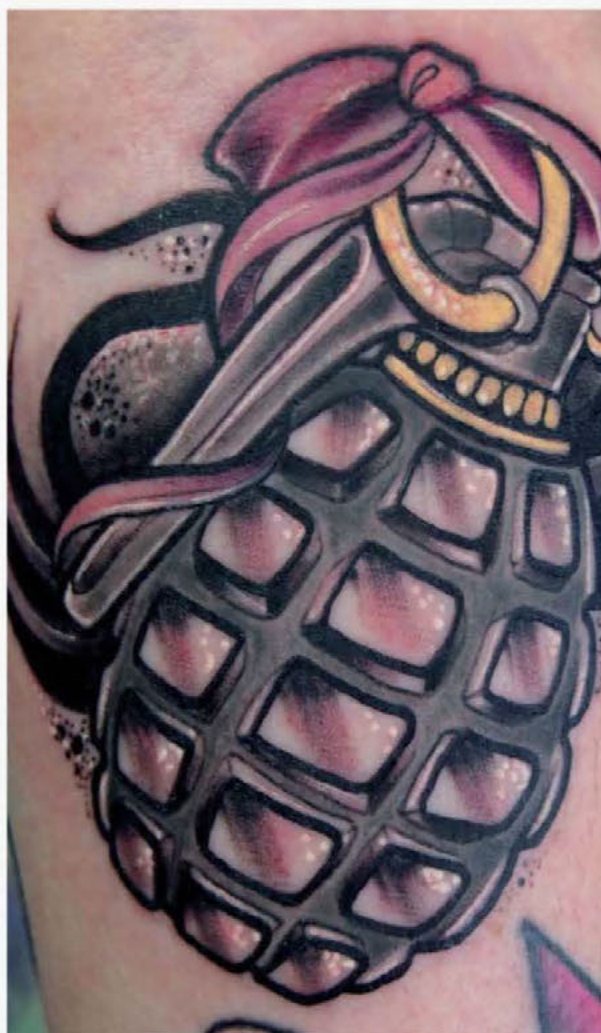
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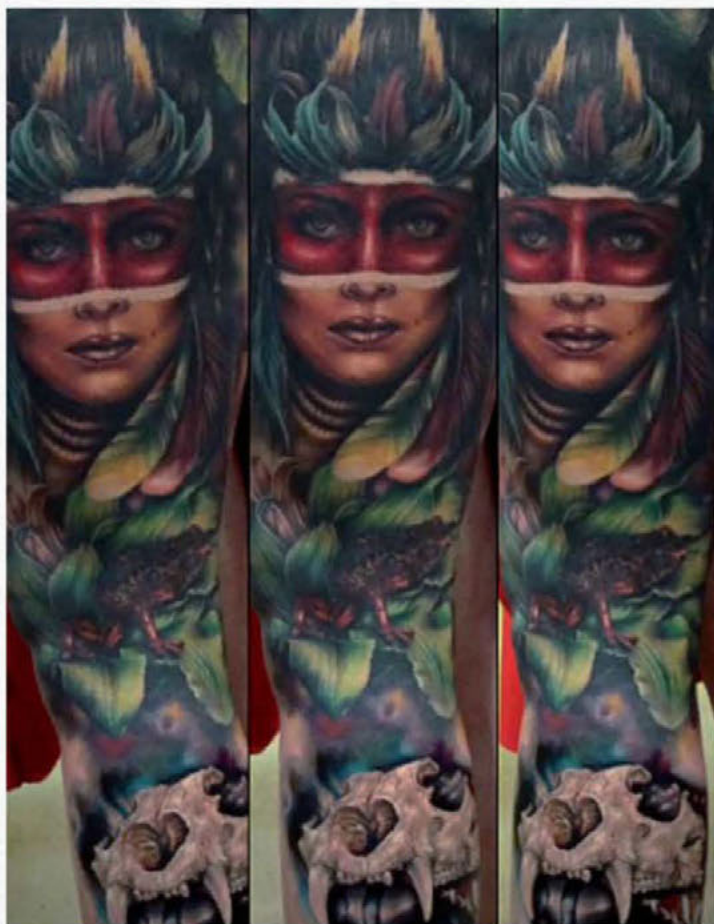
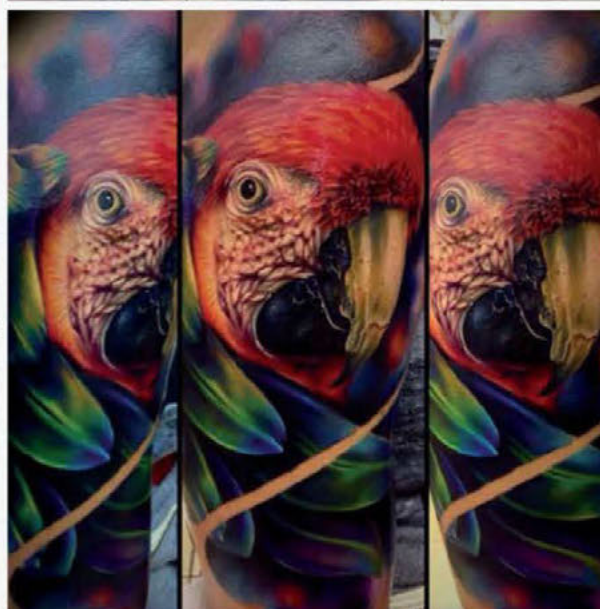
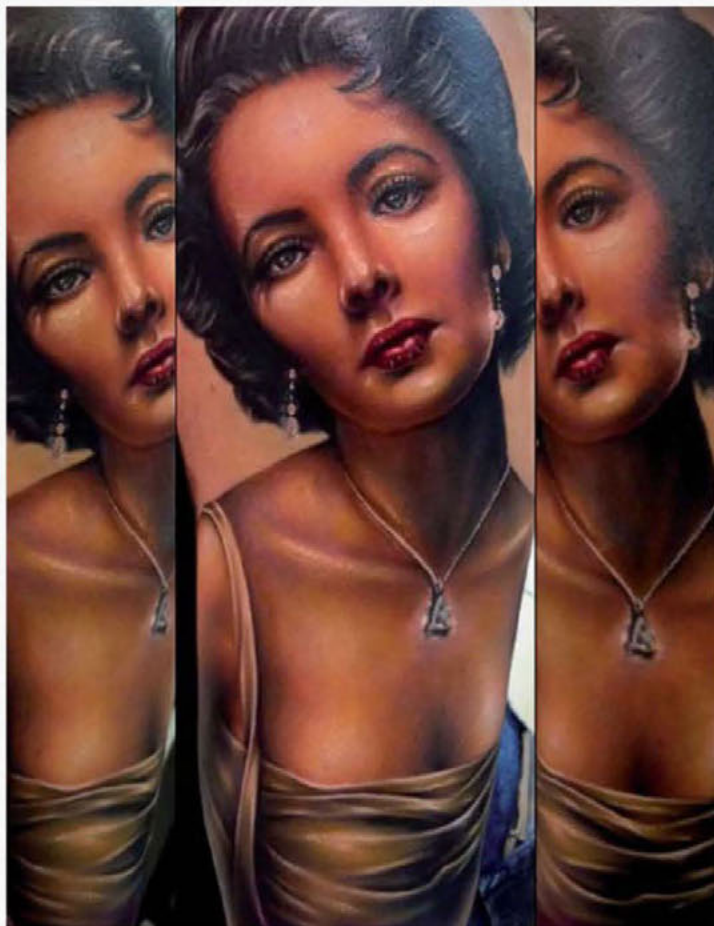




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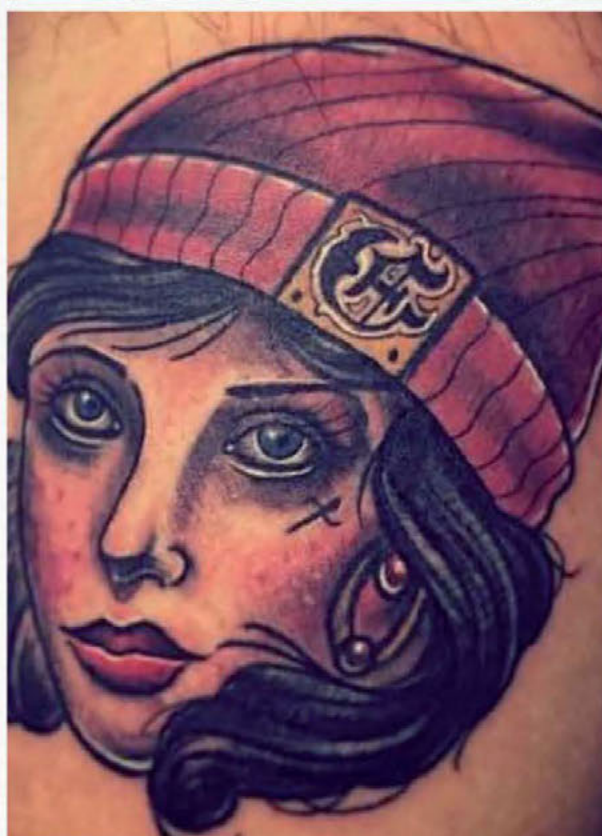
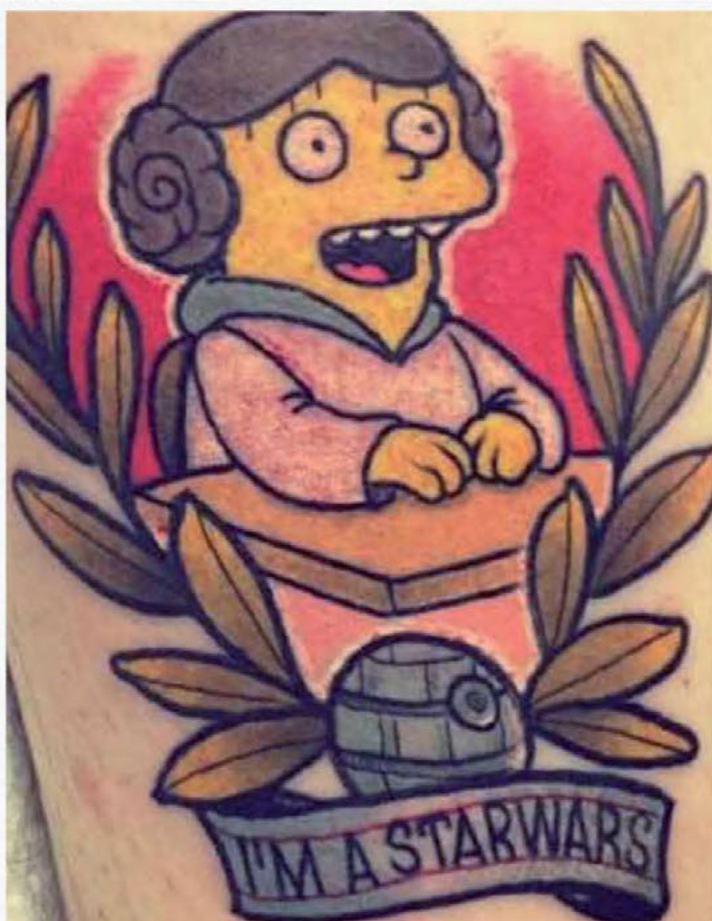
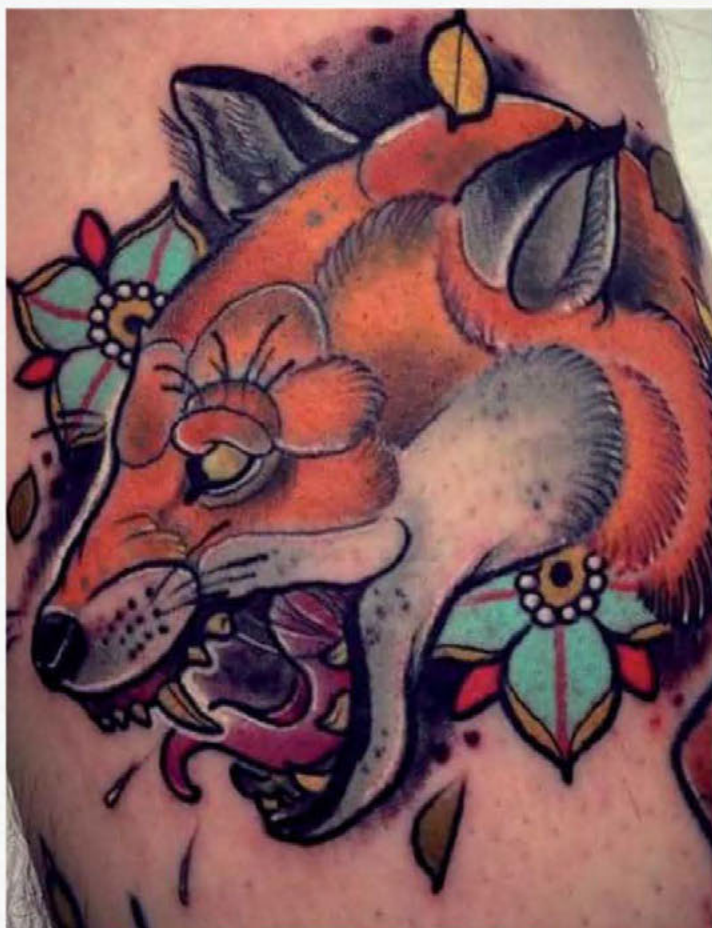


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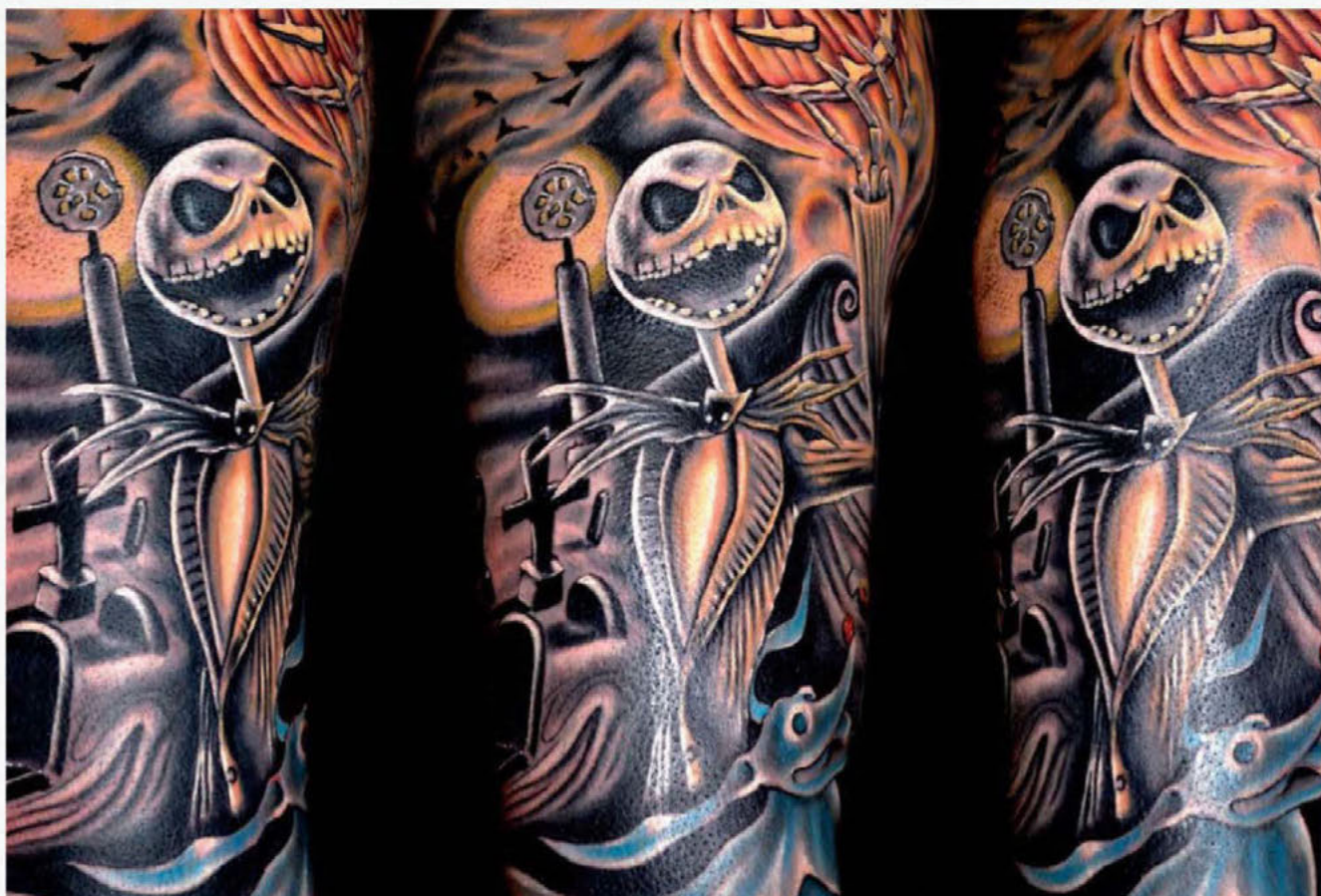


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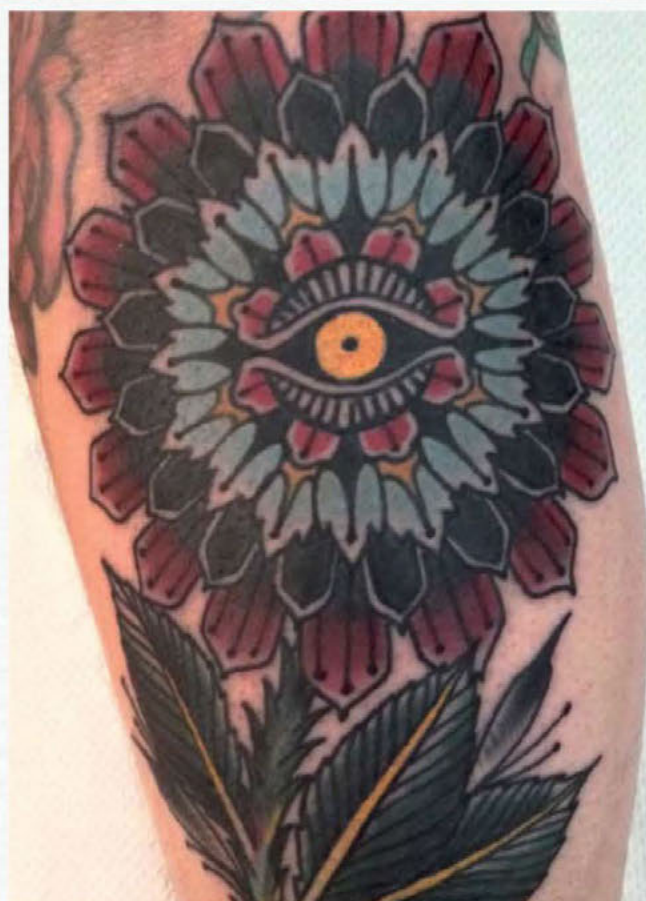
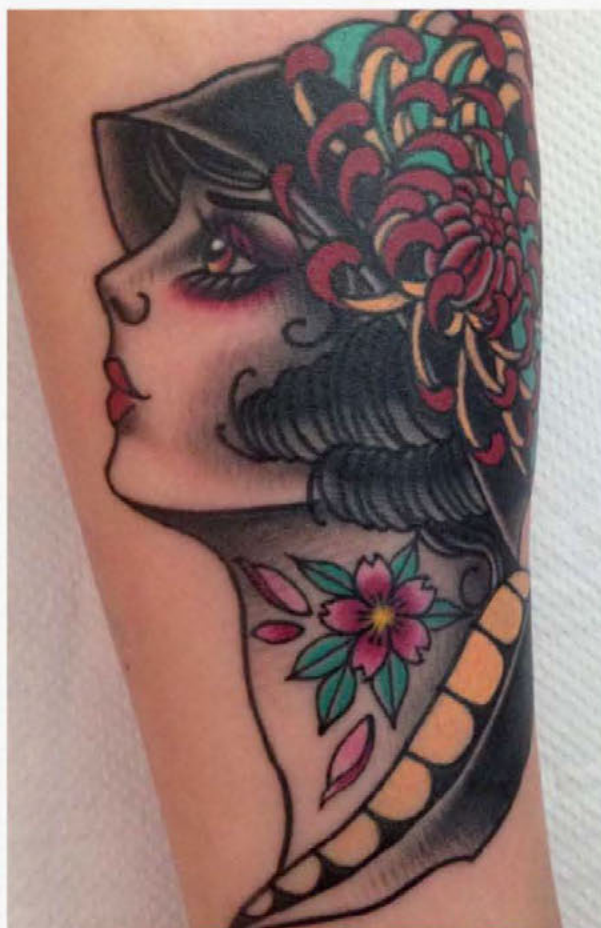
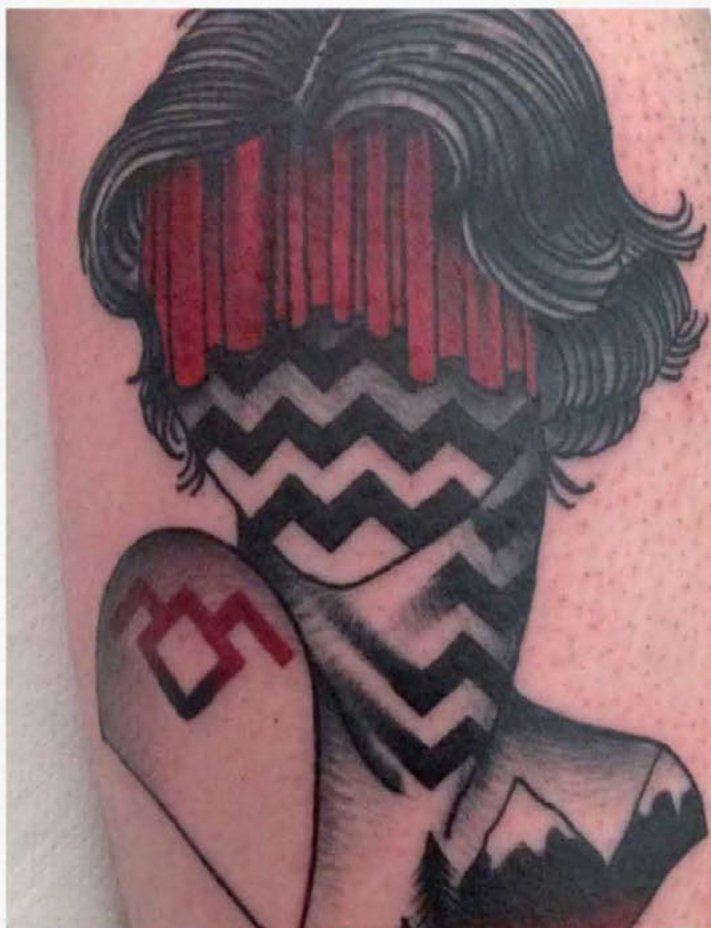


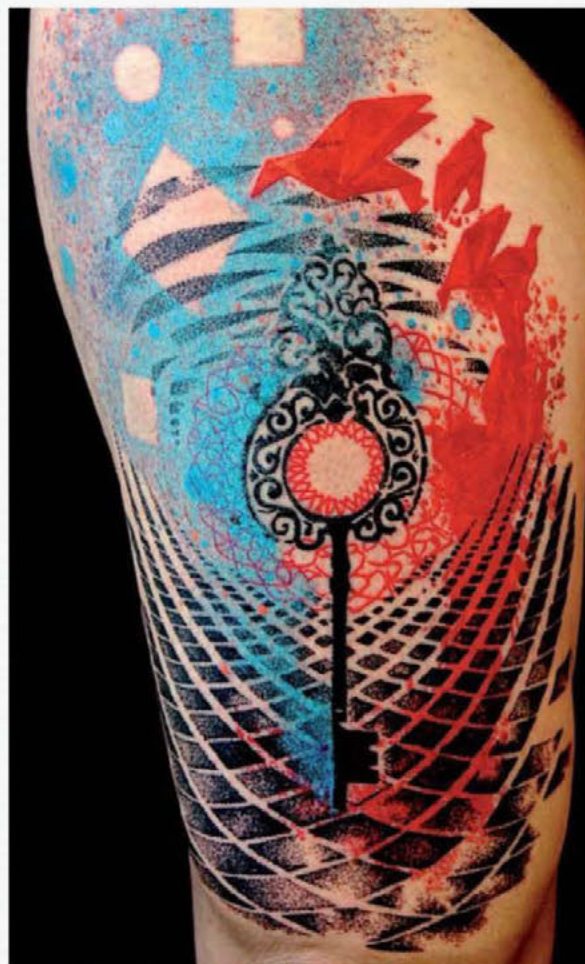
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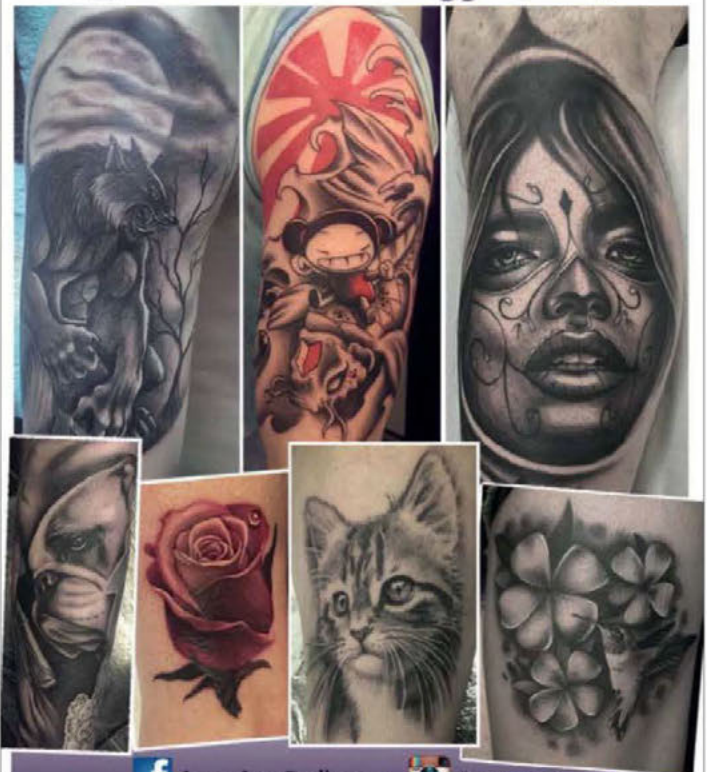
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BEHIND THE INK

BLACK AND GREY REALISM

What makes a tattoo artist tick? Wayne Simmons continues his Behind The Ink series, unpacking the pieces that make up some of his favourite artists working today. This month, he's chatting to Sonny Mitchell and Richard Guy, two realism artists with a very black and grey approach to life

Not too long ago, if you had asked a tattoo artist for a portrait or realism piece, they would have immediately reached for a bottle of black ink. Simply put, realism meant black and grey, with maybe a little touch of white here and there for highlights. But you could forget about colour. Of course, times change and now we have artists such as Chris Jones, Sam Barber and Max Pniewski (among many others) flying the colour realism flag in the UK, but black and grey remains a sought after style.

'I mainly do it because I'm too lazy to carry round all those colours and too cheap to buy them,' laughs Sonny Mitchell. He's a self-taught



Sonny Mitchell

artist working out of his own studio, Black Lotus in Liverpool, since 2010. He's also part of a perhaps decreasing number of artists specialising in black and grey – maybe somewhat begrudgingly. 'I'd like to do more colour,' he admits, 'but always said I wouldn't until I was happy with my black and grey on every level: application, healing, likeness, speed.' Safe to say, looking at the pics that go along with this piece, that day shouldn't be long coming.

Sonny's background is in animation, not portraiture. 'Dragonball Z changed my life,' he smiles. 'I finished school, took a course in Art and Design then went on to university to focus on animation.' But, sadly, the

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All work this page Sonny Mitchell

course didn't measure up to his expectations, nor did university life in general. 'A waste of time and the tutors didn't have a clue,' sums up Sonny's experience on that front.

Thankfully, his enthusiasm for art wasn't curbed too much. Finding himself moving towards an interest in realism, the Bristol-based portraitist, Chris Guest, (known for using heavily tattooed models and a gritty rock 'n roll vibe to his work), was and continues to be a big influence on what Sonny's doing now.

For Catterick based artist, Richard Guy, it was a passion for the macabre that got him motoring. 'My parents let me watch hor-

I MAINLY DO IT BECAUSE I'M TOO LAZY TO CARRY ROUND ALL THOSE COLOURS

SONNY MITCHELL

ror films from a very young age,' he tells me, citing Texas Chain-saw Massacre, Alien and Silence of the Lambs among his favourites. 'I try to put some of the eerie feel from those films into my work, even on things that aren't meant to have it, like a portrait or

wildlife piece, just by adding loads of black or having a bit of a scratchy texture in there. I guess it's become a big part of my style now.'

Giger is a massive influence on Richard's work. 'The textures, the depth and the use of blacks - that surreal look he achieves and the sense of madness. There's so much to take in, it leaves you hypnotised.' Richard tries to incorporate a similar attention to detail



All work this page Richard Guy

into his own work, using plenty of black to, as he puts it, 'overpower the piece.'

Unlike some of his peers, such as Dan Henk who I interviewed back in issue 249, Rich is not a critic of the hyper-realism trend. 'People say that you lose the fact it's a tattoo if it's got that photographic look, but it's still on the skin so it's still a tattoo,' he points out. 'I don't think you lose the art as the style of the artist will always show through. If you were to take five artists and give them the same photo to work from, I bet they would all inject their own look and style into the piece while still representing the subject matter.'

**I TRY TO PUT SOME OF
THE EERIE FEEL FROM
THOSE FILMS INTO
MY WORK—EVEN ON
THINGS THAT AREN'T
MEANT TO HAVE IT**

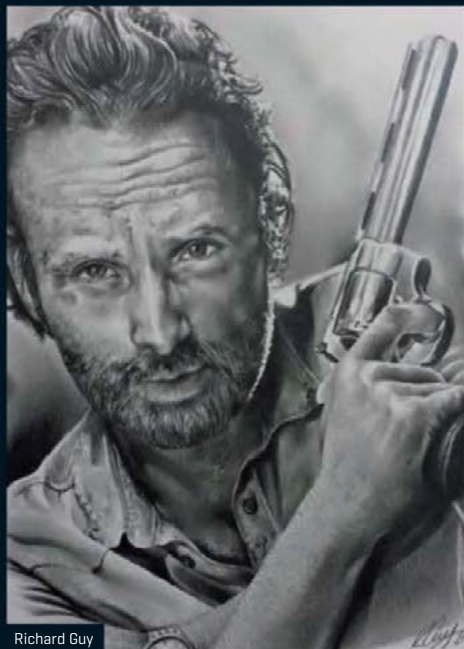
RICHARD GUY

As long as the tattoo heals well and lasts, pack in as much detail as possible.'

Sonny agrees. 'If you can do something hyper-realistic, and have it look like a photograph,' he says, 'isn't that what we all want?' He is a little cynical about the current trend of artists rushing to specialise in realism, though, and how it's become a badge of honour. 'I think it's a hard thing to achieve. I see a lot of people doing realism and there's nothing real about it.' He reckons more artists should work the trenches, so to speak, and learn their craft by doing whatever walks into the shop. 'I always tell people to try a bit of eve-



Richard Guy



Richard Guy



Sonny Mitchell



Richard Guy



Sonny Mitchell



Sonny Mitchell

rything. Until two years ago, I was doing stars and clouds, Beckham angels, Kois... you name it.' And doing it all well, no doubt.

Of course, elitism and political wrangling within the industry has come up before in this series. We broached it with our traditional artists in the first Behind the Ink feature (issue 251), talking of how some old school guys viewed realism as not pure enough while some of the realism crowd looked down upon the alleged simplicity of old school.

Rich can see both sides. 'I think realism is seen as the daddy because so many artists are at it and taking their art to mind-boggling

**PEOPLE SAY THAT YOU
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STILL A TATTOO**

RICHARD GUY

levels. There are no limits: colour, black and grey; it's going to carry on getting better and more people are heading towards specialising in it. That said, a great traditional piece can still blow me away.'

Sonny's less generous about the whole thing. 'There's loads of snobbery in tattooing and I don't understand why, as we're all doing the same thing! I've not seen people hating on other styles but I'm guessing it's out there: die hard colour fans hating on black and grey, realism fans hating on trad.' He shakes his head. 'What's the point? It's all tattooing and it all comes from the same source.'

The man has a point y'know. ▣

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Oriental Beat

While tattooing is hitting its stride in Russian society, with realism and dotwork being the most popular styles, Slava Starkov continues to shape Saint Petersburg with his own appreciation of the Japanese tattoo, with a strong focus on impact, motion and technique

@slavastarkov starkovtattoo
www.slavastarkov.com

Having found the perfect combination he was looking for between art and tattooing in the oriental tradition, Slava Starkov got more and more concerned about the authenticity of his work and recently started to learn tattooing by hand. Needless to say, despite being one of the greatest tattoo artists in the country specialised in the style, he's also one of the most dedicated.

What did the tattoo world look like in Russia when you started?

When I was a kid, you could only see tattoos in bath or in a sauna. It is hard to call them tattoos though because they were simple soviet home-made engravings on the skin. Usually tattoos were done when in the army or in jail. I started doing tattoos in 1999—I was 18 years old—when I entered university in Saint-Petersburg to study water-engineering. At that time, there were only a few professional tattoo artists and the best were George Bardadim, Bi Joe and Taras Shevchenko.

Most of the tattoo artists used self-made machines or owned machines from foreign countries. There were tattoo studios in Saint-

Petersburg but many tattoo artists worked in beauty salons, where they had a separate room and some of them worked at home too. Most tattoo artists made black-and-white tattoos, tribal style was popular. The ultimate dream for all tattoo artists was a realistic style. Almost nobody did traditional tattoos, such as old school and Japanese. No one that I knew was specialised only in one style. At that time you would be considered one of the best if you could work in different styles. In my opinion, the more serious tattoo artists were in Moscow and when the internet appeared, I became aware of people making western style tattoos there, i.e. using Old School, New School and Japanese. They used professional equipment, their tattoos were very bright and saturated. I was really impressed and I wanted to make something similar. Mostly, I liked the American New School style and started to make it by trying to copy Moscow tattoo artists. It was hard to start making tattoos because there was no equipment available and I would need to learn how to create a tattoo machine. I made my first tattoo machine with my friends using a motor from a tape recorder and metal



parts from a children's building kit—and then I started to practice tattooing on my friends and myself. I studied the techniques of tattooing for several years but it was really hard to find friends between colleagues, because many of them were addicted to drugs and alcohol. I was very young and it was hard to progress while communicating with these people. A few years later I met George Bardadim, a true master of high level and international class, he gave me some good advice.

How did you get interested in the Japanese tattoo?

In 2005, I came to Moscow to work at the biggest tattoo studio in Russia. At that time I had worked already different styles, but mostly I specialised in the American New School style. I practiced a lot in Moscow, every day I made nearly four tattoos and worked almost every day without holidays. One day, I met a special guy who said that I needed to do something serious, something that could be referred to as 'art'. I was very much impressed by his words and this turned me on because I was obsessed with tattoos and was dreaming of doing it all my life. But, to reach the next level of tattooing, I had to find the right way.

I started to think about the style that was close to me and to my soul. Shortly before that, I saw a man with a back tattooed in strong black with contrasting carp. I was really impressed. I knew that Japanese tattoo was a true art, because it had developed along with Japanese woodblock print art. I was impressed by the size of Japanese tattoos and I liked the spectacular combination with the human body. I felt really close to it too because I grew up in a little town and I used to spend a lot of time in nature, surrounded with water and animals and I started to fully concentrate on Japanese tattoo in 2006.





I was impressed by the size of Japanese tattoos and I liked the spectacular combination with the human body

How did you start?

At first I simply tried to copy famous Japanese tattoo artists. The first book that came into my hands was the book about Horiyoshi 3 ("Tattoos of the floating world" from Takahiro Kitamura, Hotei) and I learned the style by looking at photos of his works. I came back to Saint-Petersburg, left the studio I was working in because I could not do the work that I wanted and at that time clients didn't want Japanese tattoos either—the size of them scared people—so I started working at home.

What is your appreciation of the style?

First, I focus on its spectacular aspect and the contrasts in order to create strong emotions and impress people. This is the most difficult thing. I also think about composition, size, balance, and human anatomy. Technically, you need to also understand how the Japanese tattoo was technically created during

the last hundred years. In Japan, machines have only been used since the last decade, before they did all by hand, and the range of tools was severely limited. That applies not only to tools, needles, but to colours and pigments too. It is necessary to understand why the Japanese tattoos look exactly like this. The sketch for the tattoo was based on the Japanese woodblock print. It is then necessary to understand how woodblock prints were created, by who, and also the methods of stylisation of the Japanese woodblock prints which later were transferred to the Japanese tattoo. Secondly, you need to realise the technical limits caused by scarcity of the tools.

You seem to pay a lot of attention to backgrounds, why?

For me the background is the most important thing, even more than the main subject. Through the background, a tattoo can be more interesting, more spectacular and it is also possible to link different parts of the compo-



sition – the main and the secondary. In addition, the background combines harmonically with human anatomy and allows the tattoo to flow from one place to another. The Japanese background is the business card of the style and for me, its authenticity is very important. It is interesting to work with the background, because it allows you to stylise the elements and—for example—you can transform the water into something mythical, something decorative. It is very interesting process of stylisation.

Which artists do you like the work of?

There are countless wonderful masters and it would take a lot of time to name all of them, but I understand that it is not enough to only study the fine arts of Japan. It is necessary to research more widely not only the concept of perception of the art by the Japanese people, but also their perception of the world and their self-consciousness. That's why I pay attention to the people who devoted themselves to the craft—their concept of life is so interesting.

At the moment, there are some people who inspire me and they are not only tattooists and artists. One man works as a cook, another makes hand-made things and knick-knacks from bamboo, some of them make woodblock prints, but all of them are combined in their love of the work itself and by a fantastic enthusiasm to achieve excellence in what they do. These people name themselves artisans, but when I look at the result of their work, I can truly call them artists, creators, because they create an art and think only about self-perfection, but despite this, they are very modest.

At the moment, there are some people who inspire me and they are not only tattooists and artists. One man works as a cook, another makes hand made things and knick knacks from bamboo



It is possible to understand why it looks like it does from only knowing the tebori technique

You work also with tebori, how did you come to learn this technique?

I have known it for many years but it's only been in the last year that I started using tebori. I did not know—and did not understand—how I could develop my skills in Russia. But, from studying the theoretical part of it in Japan and communicating with my Japanese friends, I received bamboo sticks as a gift and I decided to try. Unexpectedly, I was absorbed in the process. Tebori is very similar to engraving and the results of it, accordingly, resemble each other. It's a really interesting process from beginning to end. Afterwards, I realised that it is a very important part in my understanding of the Japanese tattoo and style. It is possible to understand why it looks like it does from only knowing the tebori technique.



What is the difference between tebori and machine?

I am often asked this question. And the first thing I usually answer is this: "Imagine that you're riding in a car and then imagine that you walk by foot. Riding in a car gives you speed, but you lose some feelings. When you walk by foot, you are slower, but you can feel almost everything. The visual difference is also colossal. Again it can be compared with drawing on the computer and drawing with a brush. The difference will be very noticeable. Tebori gives us a more vivid and authentic impression of the style. Tattoos that have been done with tebori are always individual and very special. You can feel the handwork of the artist and the lifeblood of the past. Sometimes a machine can make it too much perfect without feelings and emotions. ▣

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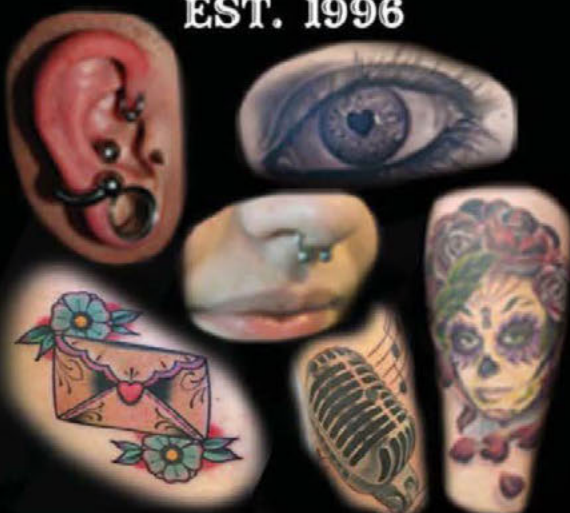
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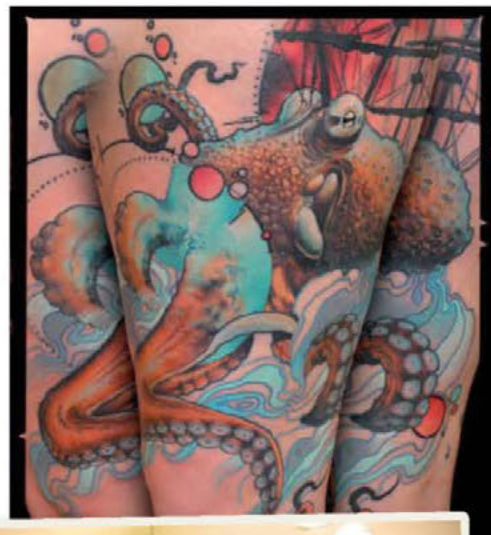
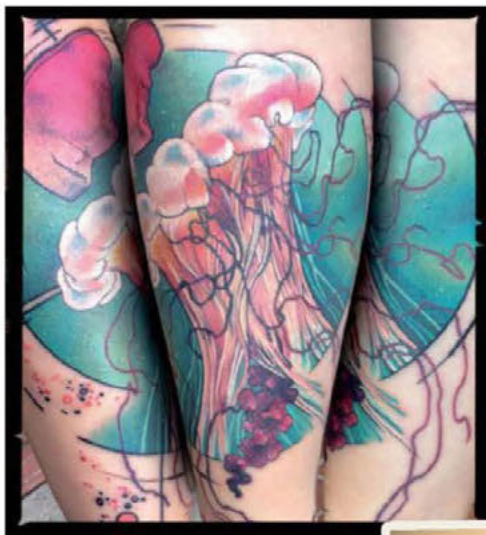
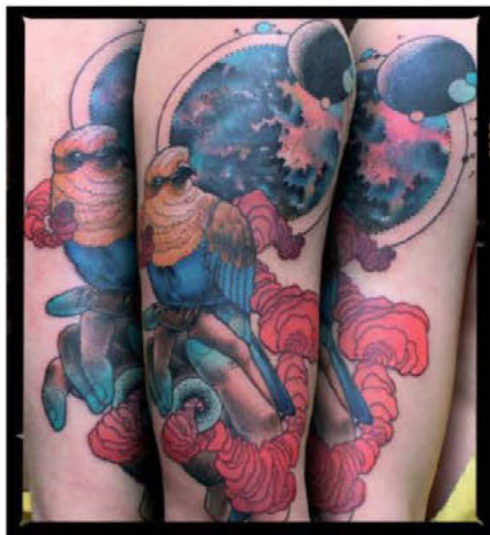
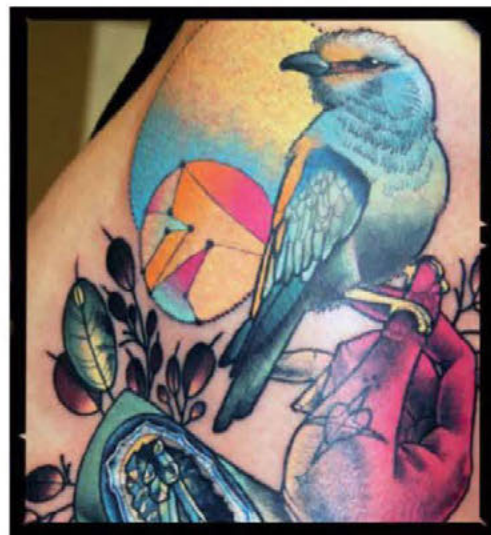
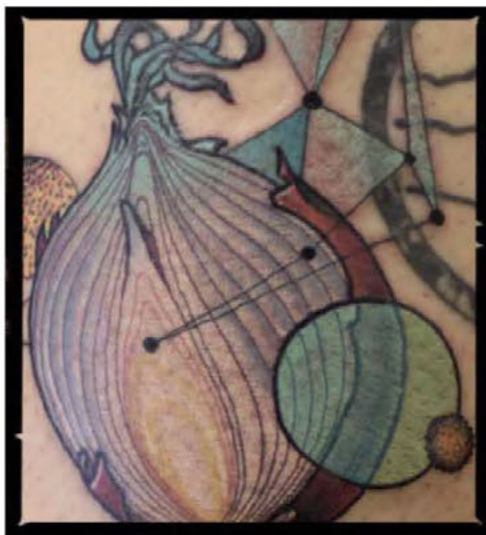




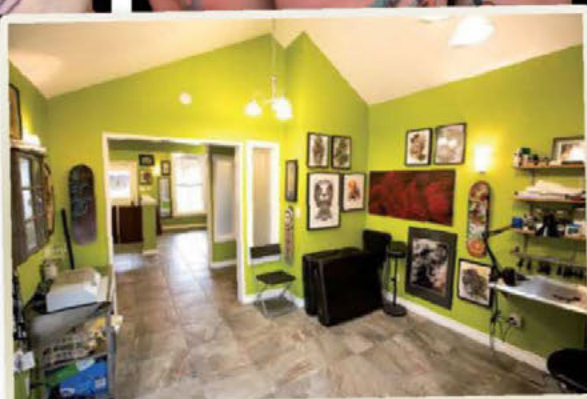
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The GOD *of* SMALL THINGS

*Canadian-based artist Cody Eich is driven
by his faith that in turn grounds him,
and underpins his desire for perfection.
Nicky Connor seeks out the truth*



Growing up I was always DRAWING THINGS that I was interested in, I started drawing SHARKS, AIRPLANES, and NATIVE AMERICANS. I also had a tendency to CARVE MY NAME into things, like the WOODEN FURNITURE in our house



One of the first things I learn about Cody Eich is that his relationship with God is what fuels him to produce beautiful tattoos – his artwork has both depth and a mystical quality that he believes comes from one place.

“The God of the Bible is the one thing in my life that never changes and always brings me back to stable ground... nothing really matters other than my relationship with Him through Jesus.”

I was keen to go back to the beginning and hear about where it all started...

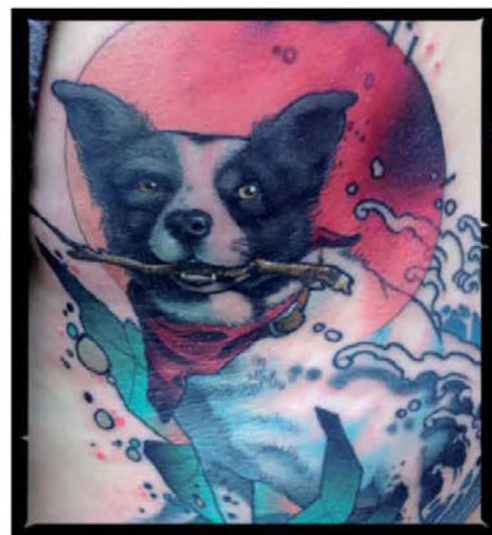
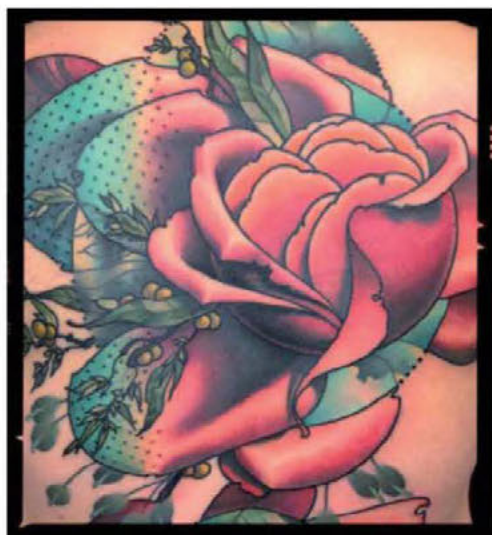
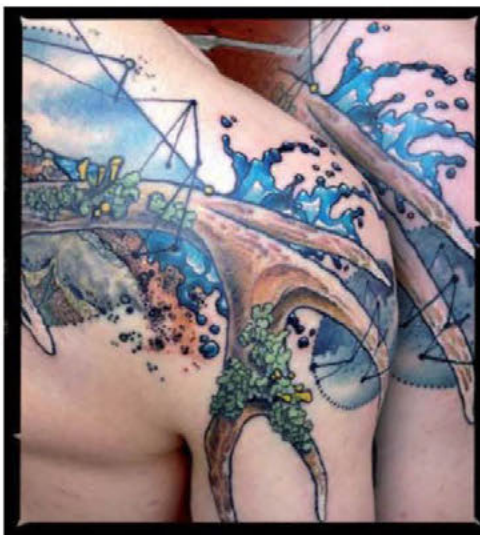
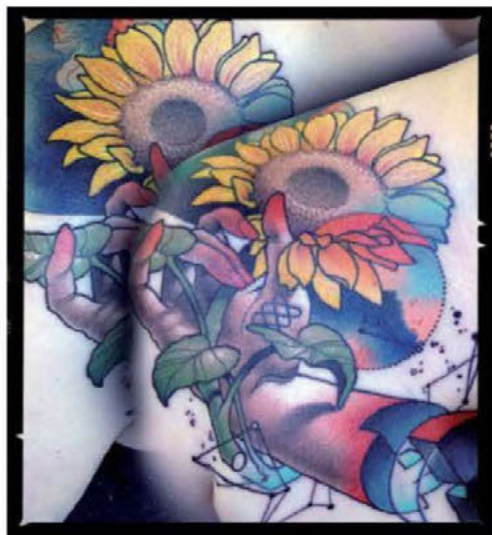
“Growing up I used to use draw things that

I was interested in, which meant sharks, airplanes, and Native Americans.

I also had a tendency to carve my name into things, like the wooden furniture in our house and I even had a phase in middle school where I drew nothing but paintball guns for months!”

Cody eventually studied at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, focusing on painting, digital imaging, and sculpture and eventually leaving with an art degree.

Interestingly, he also studied sociology, psychology and religious studies to try to understand more about people.



"Outside of tattooing, as far as my hobbies go, I really enjoy researching and modifying cars—German cars and Japanese cars mostly. I also have an interest in fashion. I follow what designers are doing. If money was irrelevant, I would probably have a pretty extensive collection of clothing and shoes!"

Cody's got a pretty strong love for music too, which stems from his fascination with the melody and beat, rather than language: "I remember getting into trouble for listening to explicit music when I was younger because the words didn't really register with me as much as the sounds."

I wonder if being able to hear music in a different way, and see the world in a different way, is what makes for an exceptionally original artist.

So what about launching himself as a tattoo artist? I wondered if this had been his plan all along.

"I had always loved tattoos, and when I was working at an engineering firm but was offered an apprenticeship by the incredible Chris Callister, I decided to say yes."

After a year of his apprenticeship, in 2011,

Cody started tattooing at Iron Elephant Tattoo in Durango, Colorado, then eventually moved to Ft. Wayne, Indiana, at a shop called Studio 13.

"My new bosses, Jake and Jes Farris, were really good at pushing me to develop my tattooing into something more concrete and something that I would be excited to do. They also initiated critique nights where the artists at the shop would critique each other's work in order to grow. This really helped and pushed me to progress."

His aesthetic style is now so distinctive, and his geometric style was indeed influenced by his time in engineering.

"For seven years I used computer aided drafting programs where images were cre-

My two bosses really ENCOURAGED ME to do tattoos like my other artwork and the things I was into—pushing me to DEVELOP this into something concrete and something that I would be EXCITED to do



These images are ALMOST looked “through”. You don’t stop and ADMIRE THE ARTWORK as much as just read the image to OBTAIN INFORMATION

ated using all straight lines and circles—it started to come out in my painting as because of this. I am fascinated by the aesthetics of building plans, city blocks, and topographical map lines.”

For Cody, certain images like these are often just looked “through” and people rarely stop to admire the actual artwork behind the information. These ubiquitous shapes were the starting points of inspiration for his amazing colourful designs.

“My inspiration comes from all sorts of places. I am often inspired by fine art, nature, music and definitely other tattoo artists. I love watching what other artists are doing.”

He reveals that his most influential inspiration is “the nature of how things are” such



as celestial landscapes, patterns in nature and the relationships between living things.

“Geometry uncovers a lot of how natural things work,” says Cody. “I love the look of this definitive arrangement of shapes next to organic subject matter. Everything I create is just the creative rearrangement of other existing things put together in a way that I like.”

Cody doesn’t give a definitive genre for his style of tattooing, but the words surrealism, geometric, and maybe neo-traditional could all be in the mix. He has been influenced by a lot of different artists and styles.

Cody is currently working at Time Will Tell Tattoo, in Ontario and I wondered what the future held for him.

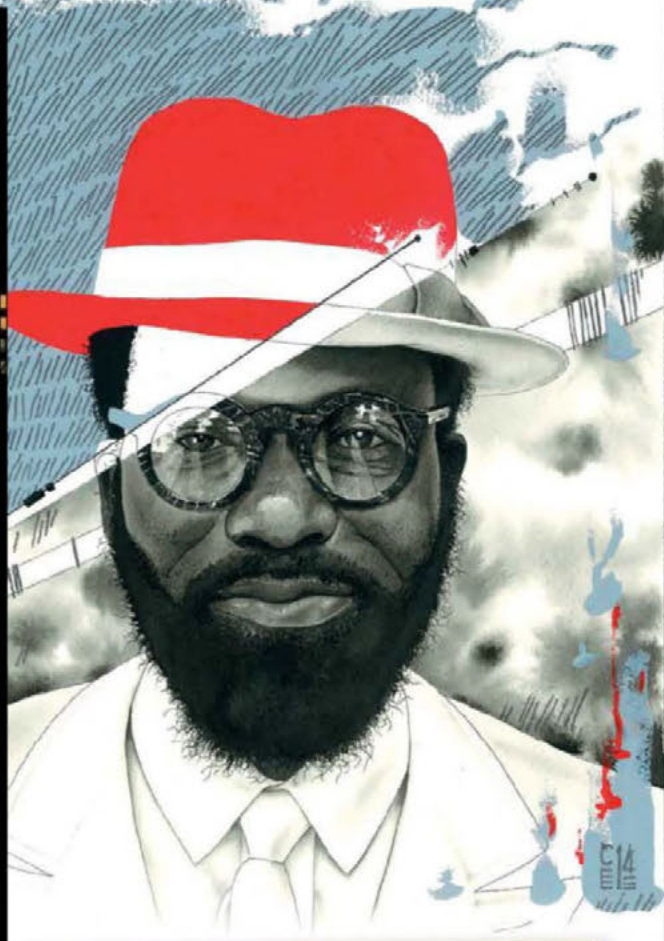
“In all of Ontario, I don’t think I would choose to work at any other shop. I work at Time Will Tell in an historic building in downtown Burlington, really close to Lake Ontario and about thirty minutes from Toronto.

I work with four other great artists, Evan Dowdell, Bailey Moffat, Dylan Conboy, and Curtis Rushton. They each work in different styles than I do, so it’s really fun to see what they are each doing. The atmosphere is professional but relaxed.

We are currently in the process of a small remodel where we will be rearranging the shop for more room putting tattoo stations on the first and second floor.”

Most of his clients find Cody online and he’s booked up for five months at a time.

“I prefer when a client has a rough idea of what they want and then can give me free-



dom to create their piece from there. I have started booking larger pieces lately after having been settled in Canada for a bit which has been fun, but I like doing large and small tattoos alike."

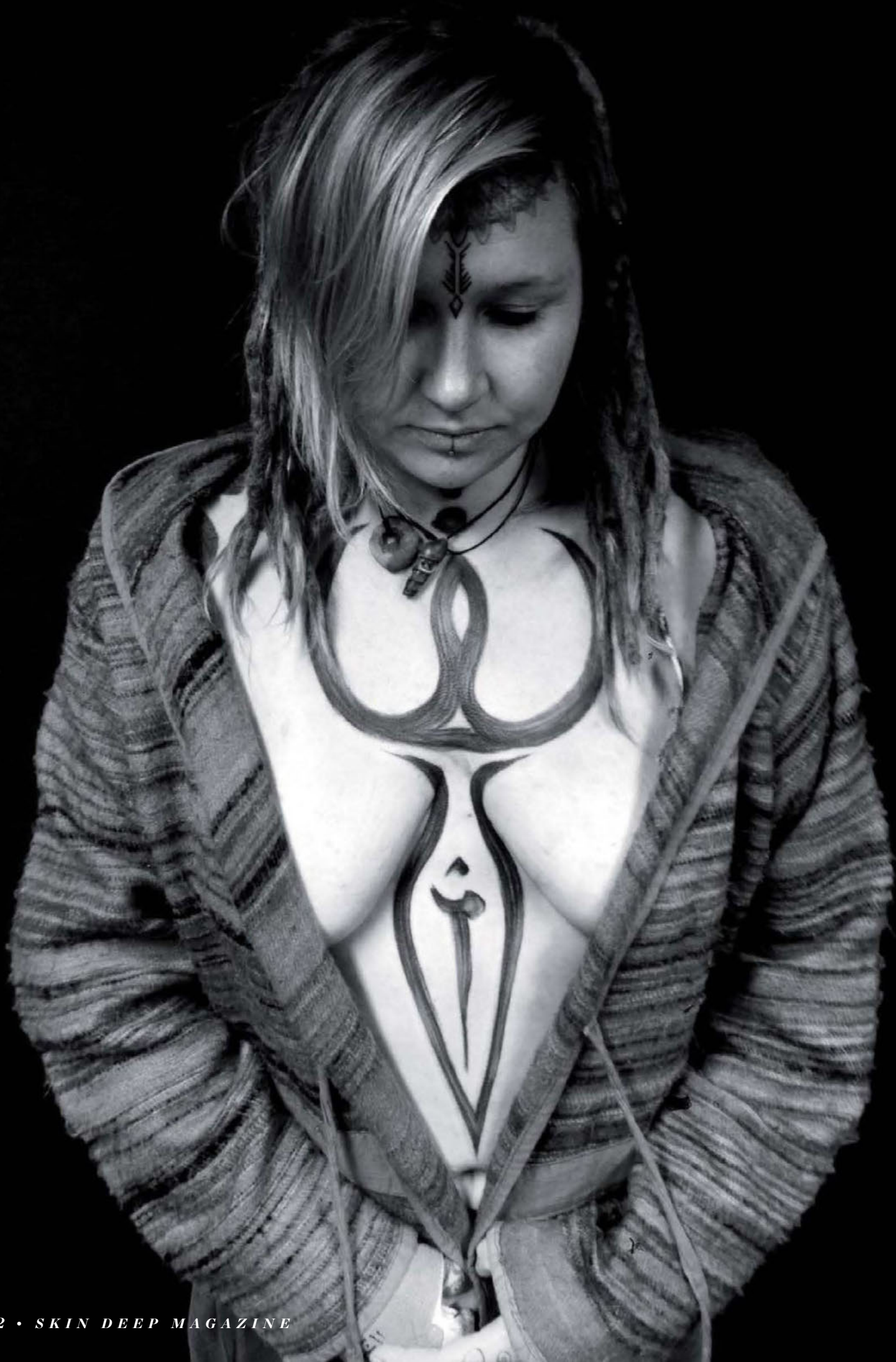
With the work of other artists being one of Cody's sources of inspiration he is always exploring the work of others.

"Each of these artists, in my opinion, have offered something stylistically new to the tattoo industry with their creativity, while also executing great technical tattoos: Adrian Edek, Peter Aurisch, Timur Lysenko, A.D. Pancho, to name a few. I feel like I have a huge appreciation for artists of all different styles though, from traditional to realism to illustrative."

The near future is a very exciting time for Cody as he is about to become a father and also has some big shows coming up.

"I will be working Hell City in Columbus, Ohio; the Maritime Tattoo Festival in Halifax, Nova Scotia; as well as Northern Ink Exposure in Toronto, Ontario in 2015. After this my wife is due to have our first baby, at which time I will be laying low for a bit as far as traveling goes. I am hoping to plan a few more conventions and do a bit more traveling in 2016." ▣

My favourite THING IS to be inspired by the nature of how things are. Celestial landscapes, PATTERNS in nature and the relationships between LIVING THINGS



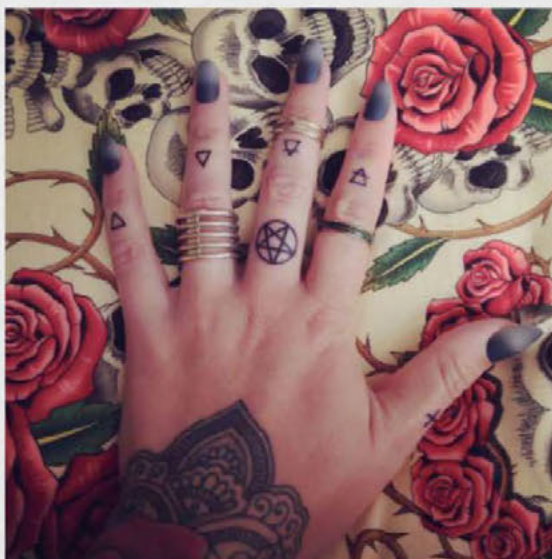
The Power of Ink

This year's Great British Tattoo Show was a memorable one for Becky Rimmer. She was dying to tell us why...

I've been to a handful of conventions over the last few years and the truth is that I take something different away from all of them. Sometimes it's discovering a new style, or group of artists, grabbing a fashion bargain or just meeting a new person. The gifts you take away from a tattoo convention can come in many different shapes and sizes, and this year, at The Great British Tattoo Show 2015, I took away something pretty unique.

After five hours of pottering around London's stunning Alexandra Palace, nicking freebies and drinking my body weight in Brothers cider, I took a moment outside to watch the sun begin to set over the dusty London skyline in the distance.

I'd made the decision not to get a tattoo today and to just absorb the convention atmosphere as much as I could. Indeed, this was the show to do just that—spirits were high and you can settle into the mood of GBTS with ease. I say this about every Jazz Event and always have done—everyone is friendly, there's no pretence, you can come as an



try something different,” says Emma to me when I have the chance to interview her a few days later. “Instead of working on one or two large pieces, I spent the weekend tattooing ‘good luck’ or ‘blessing’ tattoos for those who want them.”

So there I was, making my way towards Emma's table with my own personal intent. At any one time I can have various tattoo ideas and questions rolling around in my head. Over the last month or so two, one of these had been: how can I incorporate the four elements into a non-

ink-less human and still get loads out of the day.

I retreated inside for one last lap, and was drawn instantly to the far corner of the room where there seemed to be a crowd of people gathering around an artist working late into the night.

I was soon to discover that this artist was Emma Garrard, who works at Living Art Collective in Bournemouth. She was spending the weekend tattooing using a flash sheet of symbols.

“This year I thought I would



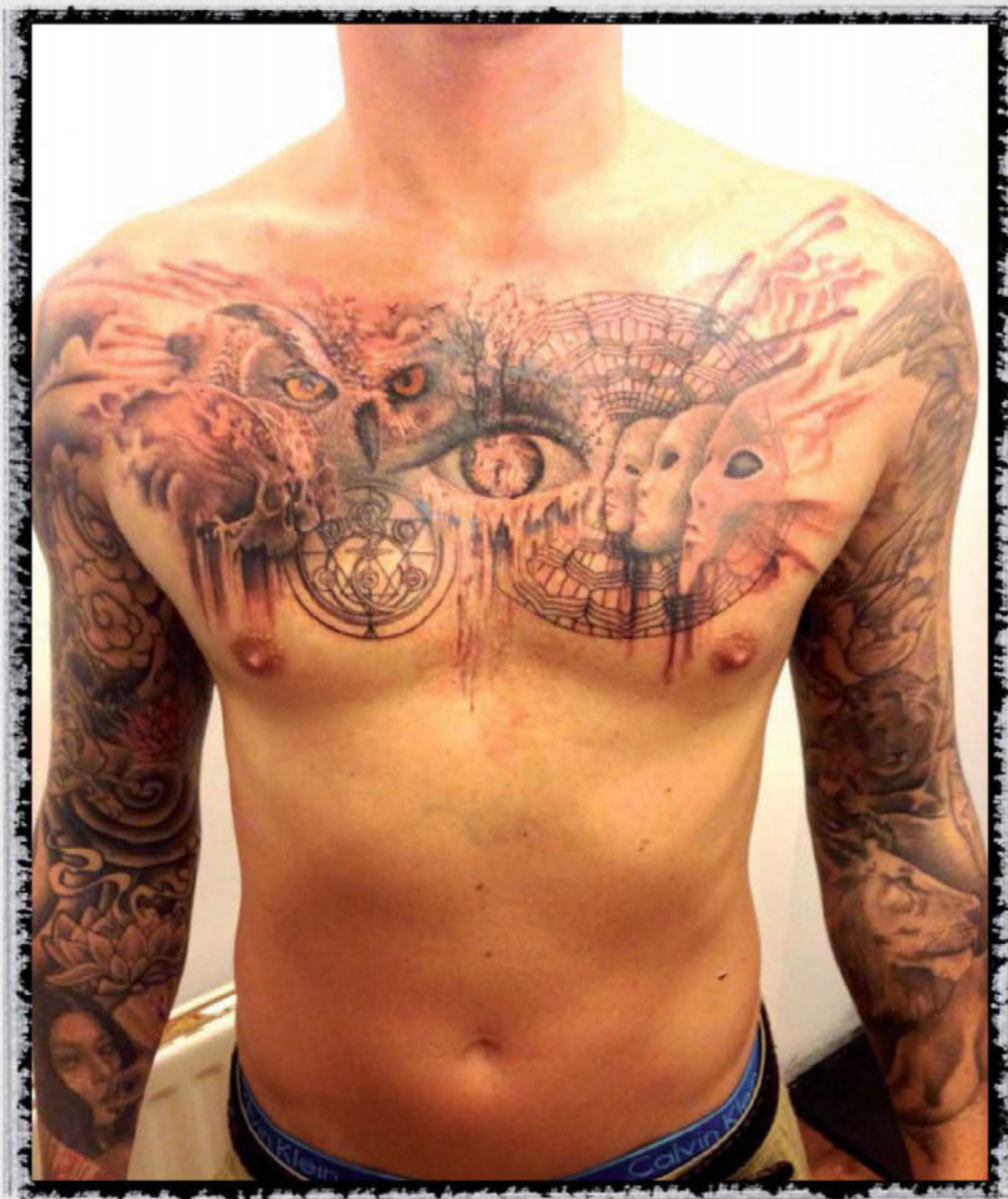
Emma Garrard and her plans for the future...

"I feel really lucky to have been able to meet and learn from so many amazing people, exposed to so many interesting ideas. It is such a privilege to be able to share with the people I work artistically and creatively.

I've just come back from travelling through America where I visited a variety of really interesting alternative communities, working with off grid and eco living. I saw earth ships in Taos, New Mexico (check out garbage warriors), and a sustainable tree house community in Costa Rica. It was so inspiring to witness groups of everyday people taking control for themselves, developing a way of living that was harmonious with the environment and providing a really beautiful life for those there.

I will be going back out in February to Finca Bellavista with a group of artists doing some work at a visionary arts festival, and then holding a small convention in the tree houses. Tattooing is such a beautiful method to unite likeminded people that are strong and brave, and up for making a positive change. I'm excited about the possibilities that are opening up and blessed to be able to use art to join communities together.

As a shop we all work really hard to grow as artists and individuals. Anyone interested in following our progress or would like more information on any of the things mentioned here feel free to get in contact."



It is important not to commit to a particular religious belief, as the whole purpose is for an individual to make a choice

naff looking tattoo?

As I made my way through the crowd around Emma's table, four symbols instantly jumped off the sheet in front of me—right at the top, there they were, the elements: Earth, Air, Fire, Water. Something came over me and straight away, with no thought at all I said I promised to return with cash. In no time at all I was sitting in the chair preparing to get my very first finger tattoos.

"I was tattooing a selection of quite tradi-

tional symbols," Emma clarifies. "Unalomes, which symbolise the path to enlightenment, Buddhist symbols such as ohms and swastikas, spiritual symbols including chakras, alchemy and finally runes. I tried to provide a variety from different cultures and beliefs. I feel it is important not to commit to a particular religious belief, as the whole purpose is for an individual to make a choice that they attach their own intention to, without an influence from myself."



If you're the sort of person who has the desire to ink ancient symbols on your body, you're likely to believe in strong forces, meaningful collisions and serendipitous events. Meaning, you don't want just any tattoo artist putting such strong symbols on your body, it needs to be someone who shares the same values as you, someone who gets it. Seeing that Emma and me shared this understanding of symbols, meant I couldn't pass up the opportunity to have her tattoo them on me.

For Emma, symbols are tools. "They channel and focus my attention and energy into things I need or hold a strong connect to. They remind me of my own inner truths. They are a form of language that has been used for generations."

Indeed, getting a symbol tattooed on your body because you believe in its power is an interesting concept. I'd spent the whole day

They channel and focus my attention and energy into things I need or hold a strong connect to

surrounded by epic artworks, internationally-renowned artists, bleeding limbs, loud music and flashing lights—yet here I was... tucked away in the corner at Emma's booth, after-hours, quietly looking at tiny and intricate, yet powerful symbols and found myself feeling completely detached from the rest of the convention and its vibe.

And I guess each person getting tattooed around the room felt the same. We each had our own special moment, and all of those moments dotted around like gems in this huge



If people take just one thing away from getting a tattoo it should be to become aware of the incredible power each person has to make a positive influence in their own lives

glistening venue. This is what makes a good tattoo convention, I thought. Those award-winning, colourful, detailed tattoos are powerful, of course they are, but so were these little magical ones.

As well as taking away my four element symbols, Emma was giving every single client of the day a special wish box. A small silver carton containing all the things I'd need to take the positive energy of my tattoos away from the day, and release it into the wider world.

"With every 'blessing' tattoo came a wish kit.," says Emma. "The idea is to take some time and think about the things you want in your life and plant your wishes into the ground. This then spiritually connects you to the ground, the earth and the elements."

I have been to many conventions before and taken away sweets, stickers, business cards, leaflets, posters, keyrings. But I'd never had this before—a unique gift to empower me to make change and attract positivity.

I was taking away a box of instructions that I had to believe in... and my tattoo was the same. All tattoos are our own magic gifts—we

believe they have power, so they do.

By taking the silver box away I guess Emma was hoping for us to get something out of our tattoo experience that every single person should. I was leaving with an enhanced believe in the symbols on my hands and so an enhanced believe in my own abilities and power to change my future.

"Tattoos are a useful tool for anyone that is going through a phase of personal transformation or growth. It's good to take time to evaluate what is important to us and where we would like to direct ourselves," says Emma.

"If people take just one thing away from getting a tattoo it should be to become aware of the incredible power each person has to make a positive influence in their own lives. As a collective we have the power to build the world we want to see."

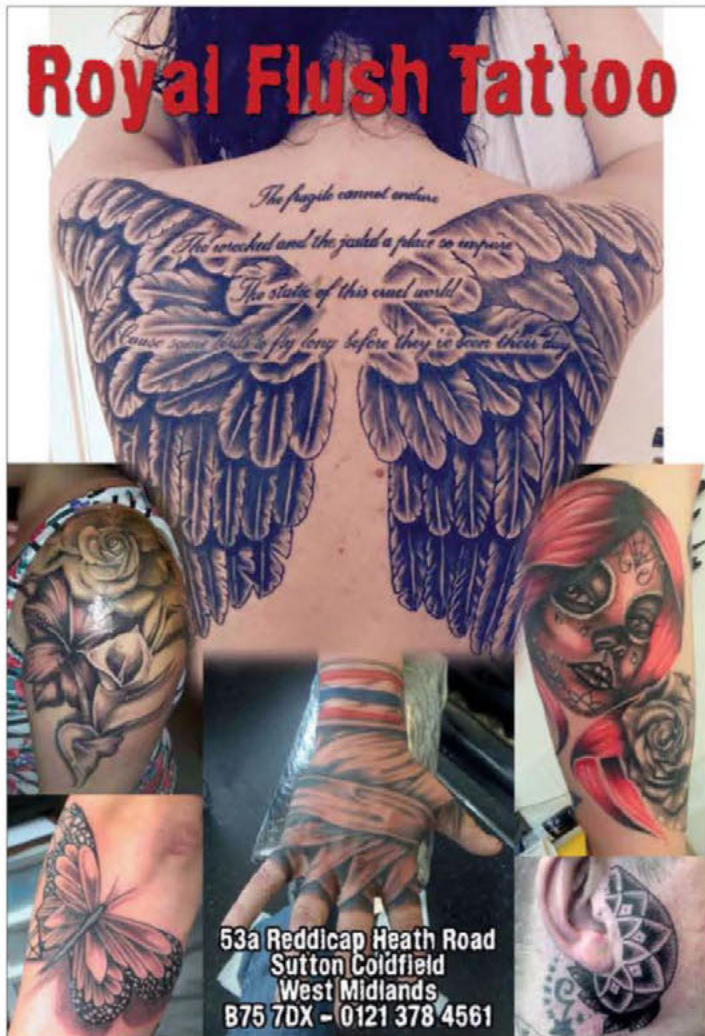
Getting a tattoo is clearly a transformation, it's a summoning of power, it's taking away a special experience in which two people share similar or complimentary energies. I think if we could give each other little gifts like that all the time, the world would be a better place. ▣



Emma Garrard

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20 GREAT ROCK STAR PORTRAITS

We were having something of a digital clean-up here this week and found a folder marked up as '20 Great Rock Star Portraits'. When we cracked it open, it made us smile and while some of them are a few years old now, there's plenty of top grade ink here. In case you hadn't heard, quality lasts a lifetime in this game...



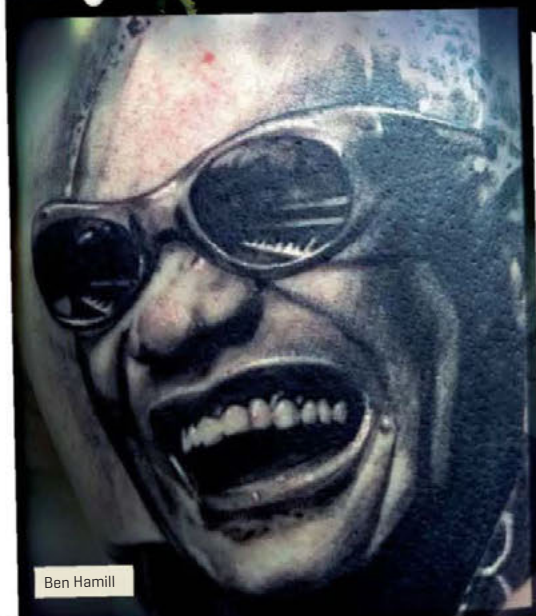


Antonio Proietti

20221. Neg Em 34455



Joey Hamilton



Ben Hamill



Andy Engel



Putka Tattoo



Andre Zechmann

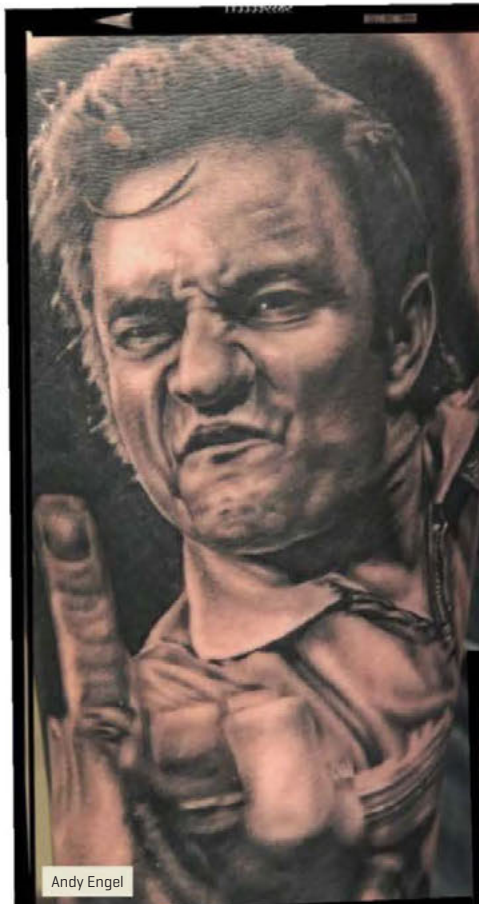


Ben Hamill

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Andrea Afferni



Andy Engel



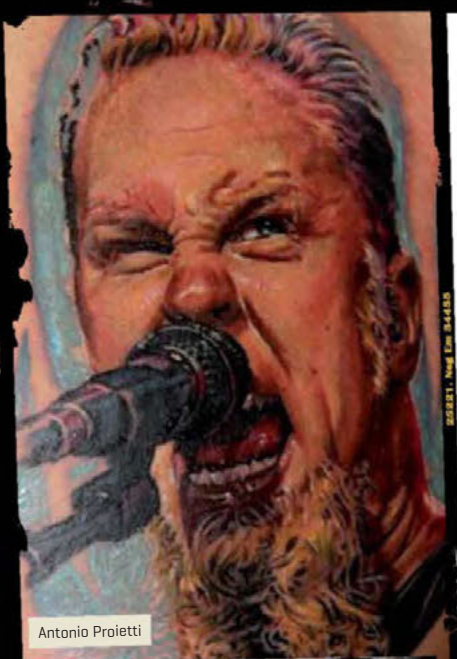
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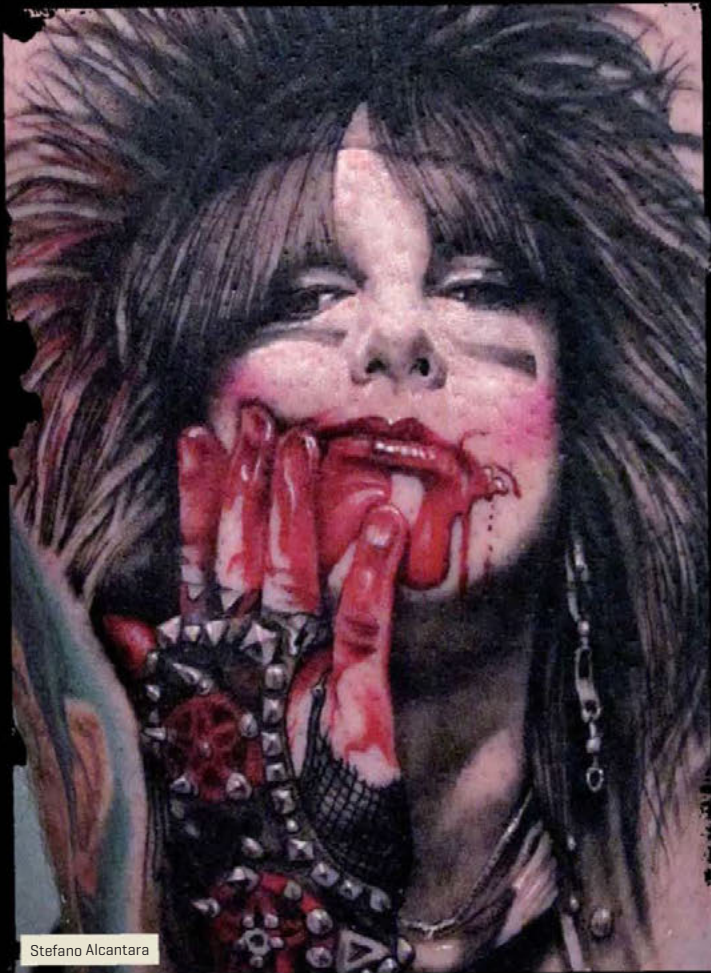
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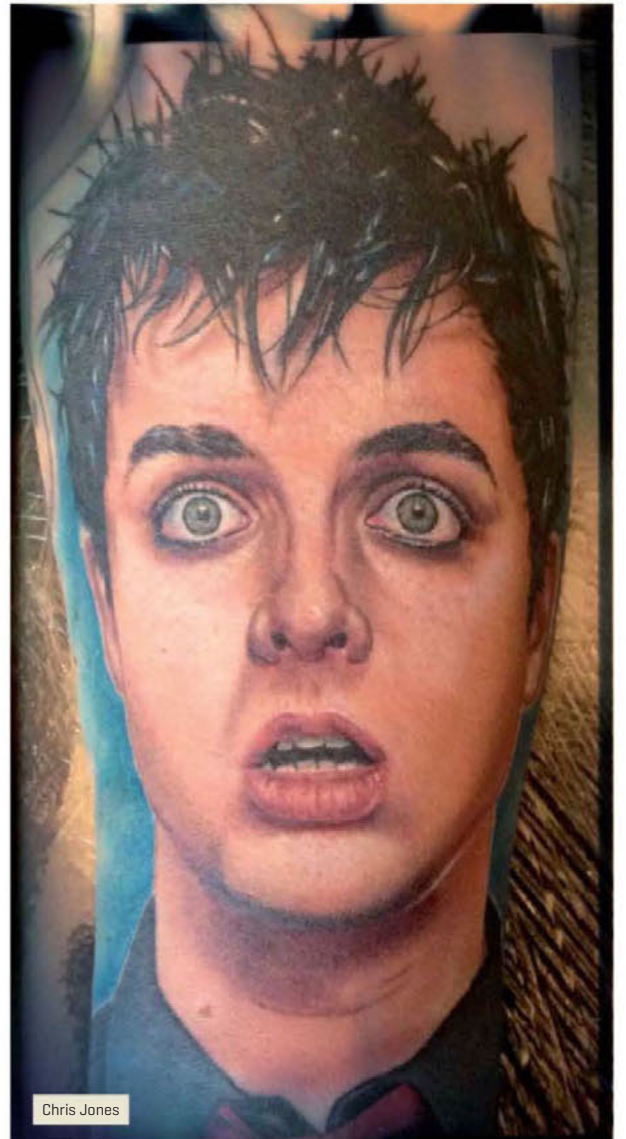
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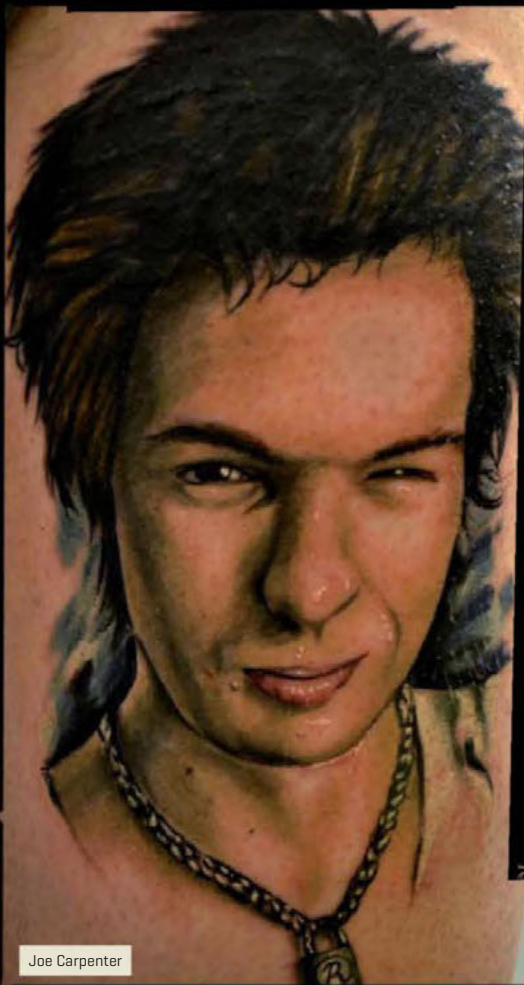
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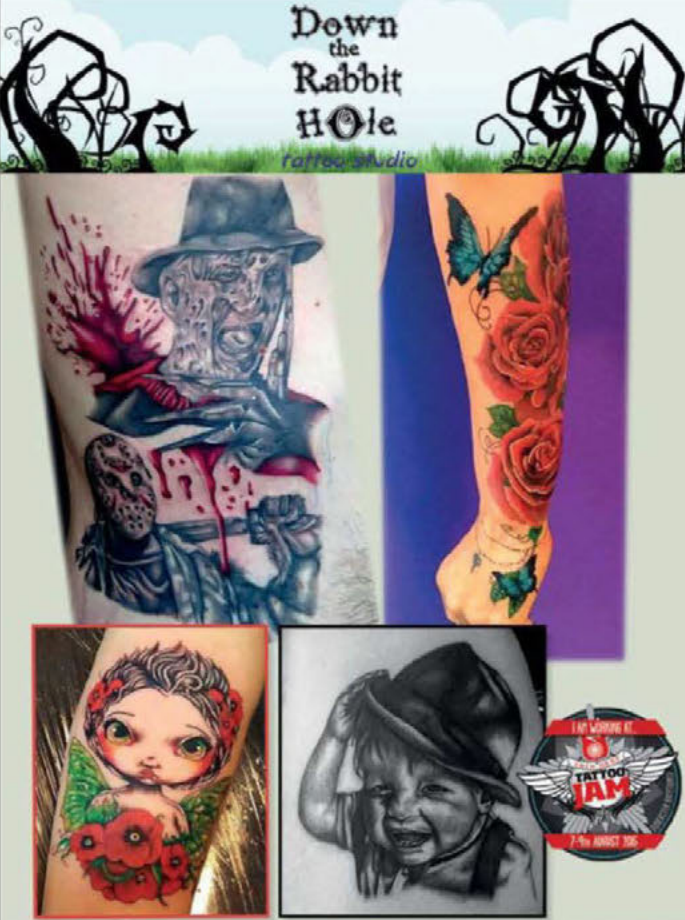
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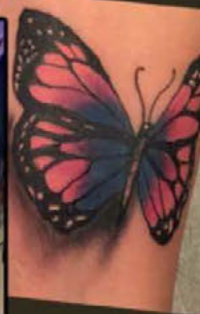
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AN EYE IS UPON YOU

BROKEN?

My boyfriend's sister works in TV, and a recent project led her straight to me—do you regret any of your tattoos, she asked? Would you like to have them reworked, or covered up, for free?

I didn't need to think long before giving an answer but it took several months before I really understood why I felt the way I did, and my reasons were not nearly as simple as I expected.

I feel incredibly privileged whenever I see my name here in *Skin Deep*, probably because I grew up with printed paper in my hands. The first magazines I knew and loved weren't really magazines at all, but comics for girls, ordered into the newsagent and collected every Wednesday. *Bunty*, *Judy*, *Diana*, tales of plucky orphans, boarding school and derring-do. These stories were my earliest cultural influences, and from there I progressed through *Blue Jeans* and *Smash Hits* onto *Melody Maker* and *Deadline*, where *Tank Girl* showed everyone just what comic girls could grow up to do.

My own magazine debut came in *Sidewalk*, a British Skateboarding title staffed by my teenage friends, and I was surprised to learn that after more than 20 years *Sidewalk's* print run has ended forever that they've eschewed the physical form in favour of a digital-only future. It makes conceptual sense of course, unlike books, magazines are designed to be disposable. Still, the announcement made me feel sad, despite the object-discarding process being something we've seen before and largely embraced. We've witnessed the decline of records, tapes and CDs and watched music cease to be something to pick up and carry home. Now, it resides inside our computers, where we can engage with it aurally, and it doesn't need to be a 'thing' at all. Fortunately, we saw the end coming a mile off. Each generation had already grieved for its own preferred format, we were prepared, and we were able to enjoy what we found instead, instant downloads and video streaming.

We haven't really noticed that photographs have gone (yet) although they've been missing for some time. At first we thought we'd print our own, that it would be better, quick-



EACH GENERATION HAD ALREADY GRIEVED FOR IT'S OWN PREFERRED FORMAT

er, cheaper, but we soon got bored of that idea and simply stopped taking photographs with posterity in mind.

Once upon a time our photographs gave the impression that our entire lives were spent on beaches, blowing out candles, or at the zoo. We used photography like a butterfly net, and caught escaped moments to preserve in albums or keep in boxes under beds. Our photographs were stored, eventually becoming secondhand memories for future generations.

Now, our photos are snapped and distributed in one, and we're either standing in front of a bathroom mirror, or broken into fragments. We've become disembodied-selfie-faces, feet-in-shoes and dinners-on-plates, and instead of keeping these images in boxes, we let them float up into clouds.

Some of us, however, feel a compulsion to

NOW, OUR PHOTOS ARE SNAPPED AND DISTRIBUTED IN ONE, AND WE'RE EITHER STANDING IN FRONT OF A BATHROOM MIRROR, OR BROKEN INTO FRAGMENTS.

save things from the ether, and from the landfill. We play records, wear vintage clothes and drive old cars, we post letters and make mix CDs. We're fascinated by those that came before us, and we're increasingly conscious of what our own contribution might be, what we'll leave behind for others to find. Will the contemporary obsession with the instant, the new, and the fleeting make us untraceable? A loving inscription on the inside cover of a Kindle won't still be sitting on a shelf 20 years later, waiting to make someone smile all over again.

Current tattoo TV is obsessed with regret, removal and revision, which is the very antithesis of what tattoos mean to me. Yes, I have some poorly made tattoos but I'm at peace with my choices, my mistakes are my own, and the permanence of tattooing is a large part of the appeal. Tattooing is a change of state, no going back, and while reworking and covering can be argued as forward movement, I'm reminded again of old magazines - like them, the human body is designed to be disposable, but that doesn't mean what is written there is without value. Unlike records, or photographs, tattoos cannot be saved by future generations, only the current one, so can we learn to re-appreciate the tattoos we once wanted?

Not always, I'm sure, but from now on I'm making a promise, whenever anyone asks me for an opinion on a tattoo they are considering covering up, I'm going to ask if I can take a photo for my newest collection, because being tattooed is always worth celebrating, even if some tattoos are not. I'll even print out the photographs.

Tattoo Fixers is now airing on Channel 4. Think about it. ▣



Siobhan Stabler-Ward

CLASSIFIEDS

Whether you're looking for an additional artist for your studio, a house manager or are selling an established business lock, stock and two smoking barrels, these free streamlined classifieds ought to get the ball rolling. Send your needs to Jazz Publishing, 1 Marcher Court, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 6BS, or email them into: editor@skindeep.co.uk

New Artist Wanted - Folklore Tattoo Studio, Tamworth We are looking for a new artist to join the Folklore family! If you are interested and want to arrange an interview or for more information please send your portfolio to folkloretattoos@live.com. Any questions or queries don't hesitate to contact us on the email or call us 01827 768446

Steel Beauty is looking for a tattooist to join our friendly team in Gants hill, Essex 3-5 days a week. Minimum 5 years experience with a considerable up to date portfolio. Should be proficient in custom work as well as walk-in flash work. Must be reliable with a good attitude. To arrange an interview contact the team @ steelbeauty@hotmail.com.

1-2 tattooist required for a very busy shop in Essex with immediate start. Please contact us by telephone - 01268 772884 or email us on - narcissismtattooostudio@hotmail.com

Turnkey tattoo studio for sale south Leicestershire, the shop is regularly represented at tattoo conventions, has over 3000 Facebook followers, magazine featured artwork and a strong existing client base. Serious enquiries only, leave contact details on 07849 489063.

Rites and Rituals tattoo studio are looking for an apprentice! We are looking for someone who is 18 years old or over, reliable, dedicated and mature. Strong, fundamental drawing skills are crucial! Must have good customer service skills, confidence and must be a quick learner. No alcohol or drug problems. Please e-mail your portfolio over to shop@randrtattoo.co.uk or call us on 07746 281 642 to arrange a date for you to come down to the shop.

Tattoo artist, proficient in custom work as well as walk in, hard working and reliable, is looking for a part time position in the London area and beyond. Contact To'ma on 07858567122

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We are looking for a new full time artist at Noir Bizarre. Someone with experience in a tattoo studio, who is friendly and reliable. Email your portfolio to hollydosdale@gmail.com [note, this is not an apprentice position]

We at Monumental Ink in Colchester are looking to recruit an experienced, passionate artist to join our expanding team. We are a shop that is dedicated to providing the best possible service and the best possible tattoos and want someone who is willing to adopt and work by this ethos. We want someone who is a good all rounder and isn't afraid to push themselves. An amazing artistic ability is a must as well as a strong and varied portfolio. It goes without saying that no drug, drink or ego problems. If you feel you are the artist for the job then please contact us at monumentalink@hotmail.co.uk with a short bio and your portfolio.

Inkling Tattoo (Leicester) is looking for a full time artist to join our team. Must have strong portfolio and at least 3 years experience. We are a custom studio off the High St so artists must be self motivated and hardworking.. We also have space for guest artist. Check us at neiltattoos.com. Please contact Neil via email to neiltattoos@gmail.com or 01163192782

Cold Iron Tattoo Company are looking for a new member to join the team, must have studio experience, strong portfolio and willing to work alongside our already established artists. For more information please contact Shane at coldirontattoo.co@hotmail.com

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THE FAR SIDE

Craigy Lee: No longer 'man about town', but 'man just about as far away from town as you could ever be'. Is life really so different on the other side of the world?

HOME TURF

It was good to be back in the UK last month, I had a fantastic time at the Great British Tattoo Show, talking and meeting some of you lovely folk. Something that seems to pop up a lot in conversation, online and at conventions is tattoo artists with no tattoos, so I thought this a very worthy topic to discuss this month...

Now, on one hand I'm of the opinion that a portfolio speaks for an artist, not their appearance. Being covered from eyelid to toe in tattoos does not make you a good tattoo artist, similarly I have seen some amazing portfolio's from artists who have no tattoo in sight.

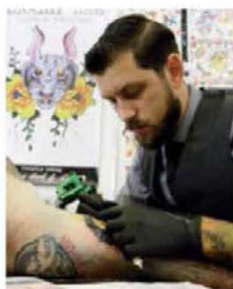
However I feel that tattooing is a lot more than just a job, it is indeed a lifestyle that we live and breath. I am in love with tattooing and have had a long ongoing affair with it. I am constantly discovering new artists and planning future tattoos and giving money back to



the industry that I make my living from because what goes around comes around.

Another argument I often hear is "having no tattoos is completely disrespectful to your customers" to which I agree with to a certain extent. If you don't know the pain and sensations your customer is feeling, you have very little empathy for them. We all know how much of a struggle that final half hour is or how much we'd love to punch our artist when they mention there's "just the white highlights to go".

I will close this month's column with the answer I always give to people when they ask



CRAIGY LEE
electric_gent

IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE PAIN AND SENSATIONS YOUR CUSTOMER IS FEELING, YOU HAVE VERY LITTLE EMPATHY FOR THEM

me if I would get tattooed by someone with no tattoos:

"Would you go to a dentist with no teeth?"

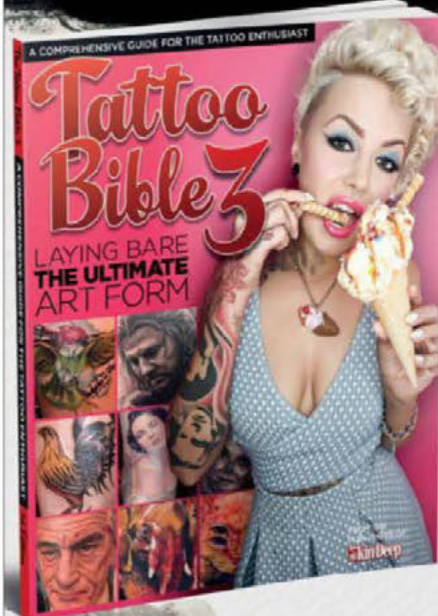
A QUICK WORD ON DEVALUING ART

As I wondered around the Great British Tattoo Show, I was absolutely astounded as to how cheap some artists were selling their prints for. While I totally agree art should be affordable and accessible to everyone, selling art prints for little more than the cost of printing them really does devalue what you do for a living and you as an artist. If this is you in the boat, I'm talking about—just think about it, for yourself if nobody else.

Got a topic or issue you would like me to discuss? Well drop me a line: craigylee@skindeep.co.uk or find me on instagram @craigy_lee

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Tattoo Bible 3

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This month, I've had a journalistic existential crisis...

Here at Skin Deep we aim to talk about interesting things in an interesting way, showcase the industry appreciatively and gain genuine engagement from our readers.

Over the last few months I have noticed many large brands (including tattoo-related ones) posting what I can only succinctly describe as utter shite. You know, those junk-looking posts like, 'WTF check out these FUCKED UP tattoos' or 'You won't believe what this musician had for lunch'.

These are brands at the forefront of their industry—a place we look to for groundbreaking journalistic commentary on tattoo or music—or whatever it is. From them, we expect intelligence, passion, exploration... and their social media feeds should reflect that too.

Welcome to the world of click-baiting. This is when social media feeds will post crap that encourages their 'fans' to click, comment, like or share, thus boosting their stats.

I was interested to find out more. Scrolling through the comments, amongst every 20th 'OMG' and 'WTF' were genuinely disappointed fans. Handfuls of people saying 'I am never going to read your magazine anymore'.

I'd like to say that if enough people kick up enough fuss then maybe the guys at the top will re-think their strategies. But, you know what? The damage is already done. You've already cheapened your brand and lost a bundle of people who were genuinely interested in you. You're not gaining any new, valuable fans, but you're losing your old ones.

I think it's time to shoehorn in a sporadic movie reference. If you ever want to explore more about said journalistic existential crisis, then both me and Mr S. can highly recommend you watch the film *Almost Famous*. It explores the fact that, as writers, we're often told what we should and shouldn't write, often by the brands and big bosses around us. The modern world can rip to shreds the organic, honest nature of writing that really should be completely "honest and unmerciful" (movie quote).

There's no way that the writers at national music magazines care what Noel Gallagher's inside leg measurement is, but they've been



BECCY RIMMER
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**YOU'VE ALREADY
CHEAPENED YOUR
BRAND AND LOST A
BUNDLE OF PEOPLE
WHO WERE GENUINELY
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told by someone that it's what people want to hear. That's how media functions, but here at Skin Deep, we function in a completely original and unusual way for the industry. We're encouraged to write from the heart, with passion, with interest and with our personalities—to have a vision of what we think is exciting and want our readers to feel that buzz. Not to follow any guidelines. We'll *never* write something because we think people want to hear it.

You may not even follow Skin Deep on social media. But the fact that you have taken your £3.95, walked into a shop, bought this bundle of paper, sat down to read, made your way carefully through each page, and now journeyed all the way to the end of my column at the end of the magazine... I'd say that's worth more than a million 'likes' any day. ▣



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